It is Dr. Casserley's purpose to present the Church as a necessary community, without which man could not attain the full spirituality of which he is capable. With characteristic thoroughness he shows how the outlines of the Community were foreshadowed in the consciousness of Israel, and how the forms and limits of the Church militant on earth are set by its nature and purpose as the representative of the whole Church through which Christian man has known God. In the Anglican communion, Dr. Casserley finds the wholeness of the Church, at least potentially, exhibited, seeing in its nature and history the unique power of holding both the distinctively "catholic" and the distinctively "evangelical" purposes without strain. He is aware of both dangers and opportunities facing the Anglican churches at this time, and there is more than a hint of the way in which he would like Anglicans to meet them.

This summary of themes gives no indication of the unfailing energy with which Dr. Casserley develops and decorates them: the sensitive re-interpretation of classic doctrine, the lively anticipation of arguments, the shrewd appraisal of ecumenical projects and ideals, the frankness and the persuasiveness of this vigorous defence of Anglicanism and the equal candour with which the author urges reforms within the Church.

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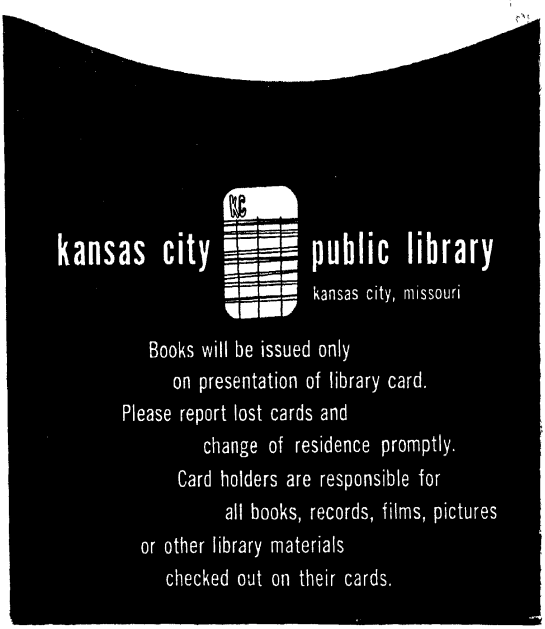

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CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY

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PREFACE

THE traditional and hallowed way of defining man, as we find it in the ancient Christian writers, is to say that he consists of body, mind and spirit. This is indeed an excellent way of describing the wide and varied range of human existence, a prolonged spectrum moving from phenomena like digestion at one end to quite different processes like mystical prayer at the other. The trouble about this traditional formula is that by a very simple process of degeneration it becomes a statement that man is a composite being consisting of *a* body, *a* mind and *a* spirit, considered as three distinct entities. Because we are compelled to distinguish between them in idea we are too easily led to suppose that they could conceivably be separated in fact, and we forget that it is one man who is body, mind and spirit at the same time.

In order to guard against this error it is perhaps better to say in terms of twentieth-century thought, that man is a being who exists concurrently on the level or in the dimension of nature, on the level or in the dimension of history, and also and supremely for and before God. It is important to emphasise that the man who exists in nature or in history is the very same man as he who exists for and before God. We must not so state this doctrine, as even to seem to imply that these three modes of existence imply three distinct and separable parts of man's being. The whole man exists in nature, the whole man exists in history, and the whole man exists for and before God.

The important conclusion to be drawn from this brief observation is that we must never commit the mistake of conceding human spirituality, or what is more often called ' the spiritual life ', in terms of some theory of ' pure ' spirituality. The spiritual life of man means that form of spirituality which is appropriate to human nature. It must therefore include three things: (*a*) a communal, social and historical element, which in theology is called The doctrine of the Church, for Christian existence is essentially existence *in* the Church; (*b*) a naturalistic element in which man's

intercourse with the things of nature is taken up into and harmonised with his intercourse with God, and this in Christian theology is called The doctrine of the Sacraments, for Christian existence is essentially existence *through* the Sacraments; (*c*) a more purely existential study—using the term existential in the strict sense in which contemporary philosophy uses it—which analyses what it means to exist *for* and *before* God the ultimate reality, for the Christian man who exists *in* the Church and *through* the Sacraments is the same man who also exists supremely *for* and *before* God, and to state the truth that human existence is for and before God is to define the basic doctrine which constitutes the heart of what we may call the Christian existentialism.

The reverse, and most perverse, procedure is familiar enough to us all. For too long it has been customary to define words like ' spirit ' and ' spirituality ' by drawing out an antithesis between spiritual things and what are supposed to be unspiritual things. Thus the spiritual element in life may be contrasted with the material and social elements, or the spiritual life may be regarded as the logical contradictory of the secular life. By many writers it is taken for granted that Christianity is altogether contrary to any conceivable form of materialism. So a typical nineteenth-century thinker like Sabatier contrasts what he calls ' the religion of the spirit ' with what he calls ' religions of authority ', meaning by that phrase any kind of corporate sacramental, churchly religion. A contemporary Western writer greatly influenced by various kinds of Eastern mysticism, Mr. Gerald Heard, contrasts the Hindu type of mystical spirituality with what he calls the ' herd creeds ', meaning by ' the herd creeds ' very much the same sort of thing as Sabatier means by ' religions of authority '. We may say that ideas of this kind are modern forms of the ancient Manichaean heresy, which always tended to conceive the divine as the antithesis of the natural and creaturely, so that the spiritual realities of life are those which survive once the natural, creaturely, earthly realities have been eliminated.

The title of this work—which remains to be completed in further volumes dealing with the Sacraments and Christian existentialism—indicates that the present writer has adopted a totally different approach. A truly human and total spirituality—that is, a spirituality which can unify and concentrate the whole range of human being in the Holy Spirit's service—must amount to more

than the mere self-expression of what writers like Sabatier and Gerald Heard regard as the spiritual element in man. Man is a social creature and therefore any total spirituality, any way of spiritual life which truly fits man's nature, must necessarily include a corporate social element. Again man is a physical or embodied creature and therefore any total spirituality that truly fits his nature must include some element which makes possible a spiritualisation of his materiality.

It will be argued here that authentic Christianity includes both these necessary elements. In the first place there is a Christian communalism—which in Christian theology is called 'the doctrine of the Church'. Secondly there is also a Christian materialism—which in Christian theology is called 'the doctrine of the Sacraments'. The reality of the Church and its essential place in our spirituality provides the theme of this present book.

As a teacher of theology at The General Theological Seminary it has been my custom to give courses of lectures on both the doctrine of the Church and Sacraments and on the doctrine of man. The preparation of these lectures provides the background both for the present volume and its projected companions. Naturally these lectures have had especially in mind the needs, problems and perplexities of an audience of Anglican students. This focus on Anglicanism will also be found in what I have written here, but I hope that many, perhaps most, of the things I have had to say will also be of interest to non-Anglican Christians. Members of other Christian communions often find it rather difficult to understand the underlying point of view and historical tradition which give to Anglicanism a deeper and higher degree of unity than it superficially appears to possess. My main aim in these lectures has been to help Anglicans to appreciate more profoundly the riches and power of their own position. But I dare to hope that what I have had to say may also help non-Anglicans to understand the position and point of view of their Anglican brethren. There are perhaps no specifically Anglican doctrines, for the Anglican communion is not a confessional church. Its primary attachment and commitment is not to its own formularies, but to the scriptures, to the creeds and to the central traditions of the historic Church. On the other hand there most certainly is a distinctive Anglican ethos and point of view, and in these days of ecumenical drawing together it is very important that non-

Anglican Christians should appreciate much more profoundly than many of them do the depths of Anglican life and the sources of what we may call the fundamental Anglican insights. Thus this book, despite its apparent preoccupation with Anglican problems, is really addressed to Christian people in general, and it is to their judgment and charity that I submit it.

J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY

I

THE CHURCH OF GOD—ITS GRANDEUR AND MISERY

I

THE CHURCH IN THE BIBLE

If it is true that the Bible in all its fullness can be found only in the Church—living and treasured in the Church as its most precious possession—it is equally true that the Church in all its fullness is to be found first of all in the Bible, that the catholic doctrine of the Catholic Church, in other words, is primarily and essentially a biblical doctrine. That, indeed, is the main theme of this chapter.

Some people have made the mistake of supposing that the authority of the Bible is somehow derivative from and dependent upon the authority of the Church, primarily because, speaking from a purely historical standpoint, it is in and from the Church that we receive the Bible. In a sense this is true enough. The writers of the biblical documents were always members of the community of God's people, and it was in the long run the general consensus of God's people that decided which writings should be reverenced as Holy Scripture, while others were cast aside and rejected.

But it is a mistaken inference from these obvious historical facts to assume that when the Church bears witness to the authority of Holy Scripture she is simply bearing witness to a particular aspect of her own authority. What the Church recognises when she bears witness to the authority of Holy Scripture is certainly the authority which resides in Holy Scripture itself. Conversely, when Holy Scripture bears witness to the authority of the Church, what it bears witness to is precisely the intrinsic authority of the Church herself. The fact that we receive the Bible in and from the Church must not obscure the real and necessary independence within interdependence, the polarity of Holy Church and Holy Scripture, each using its own authority to bear witness to the proper authority of the other, the Church manifesting her authority in the authoritative interpretation of Scripture, and Scripture with equal clarity displaying its authority in the way in

which it points to the source and nature of the authority of the Church. These two authorities cannot be reduced to an identity —except, of course, by saying that both of them are ultimately dependent on the authority of the Holy Spirit. They are drawn together by the concept of complementarity rather than by that of identity.

That the Church bears witness to the authority of Holy Scripture is clear enough both from traditional and contemporary theology. All parts of Christendom in one way or another bear witness to this principle. But that Holy Scripture bears witness with equal stoutness and vehemence to the authority of the Church has been and still is doubted in the theological tradition of several Christian denominations and communions. It is with the way in which the Bible bears witness to the Church that we shall be concerned in this chapter.

Methods of interpreting Holy Scripture

It is impossible to do justice to a phenomenon so rich and complex as the Bible if we rely only upon one method of interpretation and exposition. Since the advent of the critical method, and its almost total victory in many parts of Christendom, there can be little doubt that biblical exposition has been weakened by the prevailing lack of methodological variety. Those Christians who have reacted against and rejected the critical method—usually and rather clumsily called fundamentalists—are in even worse case than those who have accepted it, for fundamentalism is a mere modern reaction against biblical criticism, and is even less deeply rooted in the tradition and more estranged from the centre of the Church's biblical life than the criticism itself. The increasing number of theologians and biblical scholars who are now tending to move beyond the criticism, and to seek out new and more theological methods of biblical interpretation and exegesis, must not be set on one side as though they were highly sophisticated neo-fundamentalists. Those who seek to go beyond the critical method of studying Holy Scripture are not seeking to reject the critical method, or even to go behind it. Indeed modern biblical theology would not have been possible without the century of criticism that preceded it. Their task is to push beyond it, so that the Church may be equipped with different techniques of biblical study and interpretation, suited to the different kinds of question

which the biblical scholar may ask himself and the different objectives he must entertain.

The critical method of biblical interpretation, which has now become almost traditional in the Anglican communion, and in many other areas of Christendom also, is most of all at home in dealing with historical and literary questions. It either denies or ignores the unity of scripture, or takes it so much for granted as to neglect it altogether in practice, and is chiefly and most actively concerned with exploring the length and depth and breadth of the Bible's rich variety. If we must describe it in one word we may call it the exegetical method, concerned with the original meaning of one passage of Holy Scripture after another, all considered as a number of atomic units which together compose that vast complex which we call the Bible. In relation to questions of a historical and literary character it reigns in conventional biblical criticism not only alone but, it is no exaggeration to say, without any possible rival.

On the other hand it must be confessed that this method has in some ways disappointed the high hopes which it formerly aroused. It was once supposed that the application of the critical method to Holy Scripture would enable us not only to answer historical and literary questions but also to solve the more fundamental problems of Christian theology. Thus, for example, whole generations of New Testament critics have lived and died in the conviction that the literary and historical exegesis of the four gospels, and more particularly of the three synoptic gospels, would lead to a final solution of the many problems of christology, as though christology were merely an exegesis of the synoptic gospels. Of course, often unbeknown to themselves, these critics usually approached the historical exegesis of the synoptic gospels with their christological convictions and prejudices already formed. Usually their preconceived christology was of a more or less adoptionist, or perhaps Nestorian, kind. They agreed with catholic orthodoxy that Jesus Christ was human in every sense of the word, but at the back of their minds they had an understanding of what it means to be a human being which rendered any real incarnation of the Godhead into the sphere of the human, philosophically inconceivable, an ontological impossibility. For them, if we are to speak of Jesus as divine as well as human, then He must be human in the literal sense and divine by some kind of permissible figure of speech. Thus they often supposed

that they were deriving a christology from historical research when in fact they were putting their christology into their historical research.

In fact history and the historical method cannot provide us with a christology. The most that history and the historical method could hope to supply is a coherent account of the outward and visible career of Jesus. But such a life of Jesus does not amount to a christology. The life of Napoleon, for example, does not amount to anything that could conceivably be called a 'napoleonology'. Indeed we should normally and rightly say that we do not require and cannot have anything in the nature of a 'napoleonology'. Christology is not a doctrine which demonstrates the Christian conviction that Jesus Christ has a unique metaphysical status, a unique relationship to the Godhead on the one hand and to the whole of humanity on the other. On the contrary christological enquiries in the Church are necessitated by the very fact of the Church's prior and basic conviction that Jesus Christ, while possessing a nature which relates Him to all mankind, at the same time enjoys an existence and a metaphysical status in relation to the Godhead which is uniquely His own. It is only when a metaphysical being has a physical history that we are compelled to accord him an 'ology' or science all to himself, tasked with the weighty function of defining and expounding his unique significance. Thus the problem of christology is not the historical problem of assessing the apparently haphazard collection of reminiscences and testimonies about the historical career of Jesus which we find in the four gospels. The problem of christology is caused by the fact that these reminiscences and testimonies exist in the life of the Church side by side with the even older apostolic tradition of preaching *about* Jesus which makes Him an object of faith, the *locus* and vehicle of the peculiar 'Christ-mysticism' characteristic of Christian piety and expressed equally in Christian prayer and the Christian sacraments. It is the way in which these two realities co-exist side by side in the life of the Christian Church and the experiences of the Christian man that renders christological enquiry one of the most fateful and inevitable of all Christian intellectual preoccupations. From this it inevitably follows that the historical investigation of the gospels is necessarily subordinate to christology and cannot conceivably function as a christology.

Even when we turn to the literary and historical questions which constitute the speciality and *forté* of the critical method, I think we must agree, in the light of more than a century of biblical criticism, that the answers which it gives to questions of this kind have nothing like the certainty and finality which was once claimed for them. Thus, for example, the long-drawn-out battle between radical, sceptical critics and the comparatively conservative critics, who must be carefully distinguished from the fundamentalists, seems now to be petering out into a kind of draw or stalemate. The radical critics have made an important contribution to the development and reassertion of Christian orthodoxy. They have shown conclusively that it is not possible to do what so many of the earlier critics believed they could do, namely to derive from the critical interpretation of the synoptic gospels an assured outline of the life of Jesus and a convincing and authoritative sketch of His inner psychology. We now know, thanks to the radical critics, that these two objectives are incapable of fulfilment. The Christ must be interpreted by the Church which acknowledges Him as her Lord in some other way. On the other hand the conservative critics have insisted, with at least an equal degree of cogency, that even if we cannot write a life of Jesus, still less plumb the depths of His inner self-consciousness, we have at least in our possession a considerable amount of trustworthy information and testimony about His visible life and audible teaching, information which is not self-explanatory or self-interpreting but which nevertheless provides data more than sufficient for the theological interpretation which it demands from and receives in the growing tradition of the Church.

The more theological method of biblical interpretation, which is coming increasingly to the fore in contemporary theological writing—to mention only one outstanding example, in the three volumes of Lionel Thornton's treatise *The Form of the Servant*—may perhaps be described as hermeneutical rather than exegetical, that is to say, concerned less with literary exposition than with doctrinal interpretation. It takes for granted the obvious fact of the immense variety of Holy Scripture and seeks once more to demonstrate the reality of the underlying unity. We may illustrate this concept of the unity of scripture by likening it to the unity of Wagner's cycle of four operas *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. Here we certainly find plenty of variety, but there is also a unity, a

profoundly musical unity created by the composer's concentration on certain basic musical motifs which continually recur in many different forms throughout the whole cycle. From the strictly musical point we might describe *The Ring* as a vast complex of themes and variations, and it is only by learning to recognise these themes as and when they occur that we can make any real musical sense of the whole structure. To appreciate it is not merely to enjoy the magnificent climaxes and musical episodes with which it abounds but to grasp it in its essential underlying unity.

The method of the kind of biblical study and technique of exposition which I have now in mind is similarly to identify the great underlying and recurrent biblical motifs and to attempt to do justice to their cumulative effect. This is perhaps more difficult than may at first sight appear, because these underlying and recurrent biblical motifs rarely repeat themselves precisely, but rather they repeat themselves in a profusion of subtle variations. It is a mistake, for example, to suppose that where one particular word is closely associated with a particular biblical theme the theme can be present only where the word itself is used. Thus, to select one instance which will be of some importance to us later on, the biblical idea of the *remnant* may be present even in the absence of any of the words used for ' remnant '. If we will not recognise the idea of the remnant except when the word itself is employed—and this is perhaps the general tendency of the mere exegete—we shall fail to detect the presence of the theme of the remnant in such crucial and profoundly related biblical episodes as those of Noah in the Ark, Elijah in the cave and Christ on the cross.

The world of biblical imagery is in fact a world of and for the imagination. This does not mean, of course, that it is an irrational world, but it does mean that the kind of reasoning which is capable of exploring its meaning to the depths must be an imaginative reasoning, and not reason as defined by a narrow type of rationalism which conceives of reason as the antithesis of the imagination, indeed as the antithesis of everything other than itself in man. Reason is not a separate faculty in man but a function of the whole man. We can only reason with all that we are, and true reason draws all our capacities into its service. The interpretation of Holy Scripture demands an imaginative and prayerful rationalism which does not limit or frustrate reason but rather raises it to its highest pinnacle of achievement.

Perhaps something like this doctrine was hinted at by Origen in a passage in which he discusses whether or not God is the author of evil. ' I am well aware ', he says, ' that people who are willing to venture the assertion that even evil originated from God will quote certain texts from the Bible, though they cannot display *a coherent series of texts*.' Of course this may mean little more than that measure of truth which is conveyed in the rather loose talk of some conventional theologians about ' the general sense of Holy Scripture '. But it is at least permissible to suppose that he may have had something rather deeper in mind, that his concept of ' a coherent series of scriptural texts ' may resemble and even be the remote ancestor of our more contemporary concept of a meaningful and cumulative succession of biblical images given to us in a series of contrasting variational forms.

This is a book about the Church, not about the methods of scriptural interpretation. I have prefaced this chapter with a brief summary of my own personal views about the methods of biblical interpretation because it is this hermaneutical method on which I propose to rely in the present discussion. I shall not follow the conventional way of endeavouring to provide some exegesis of the relevant key words—such as *qahal* in the Old Testament and *ecclesia* in the New Testament—rather I shall attempt to grasp in some kind of unity the way in which the kindred themes of the Chosen People, the Church and the Kingdom occur, recur and overlap throughout the length and breadth of the Bible. I shall endeavour to interpret them in their unity as a coherent and cumulative series of images, and I shall have to ask the reader to reason with his imagination and imagine with his reason as we go along.

God's three choices

Adam, Abraham, Jesus. Three times in the Bible we see God choosing a people, and these three choices may be summed up in this succession of biblical figures.

The first choice of God is the choice of the whole human race in Adam. ' And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness . . . and God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him . . . and God blessed them. . . .' [1] This is not only God's first choice, it remains God's primary and

[1] Gen. 1 : 26–28

overruling choice so long as time and history shall continue. Thus St. Paul, or some unknown Paulinist, can remark that, God 'will have all men to be saved'.[1] Generations of later Christian theologians, meditating on the mystery of divine election, have distorted biblical perspective by turning God's great acts of choice or election into the choice of individuals. In the Bible God's choice is always primarily the choice of a people.

This choice of the whole human race in Adam is in the Bible the primordial and primary choice of God, not only from the temporal point of view, but also in the sense that the subsequent choices of the chosen nation in Abraham and of the chosen Church in Jesus remain fundamentally instrumental to the re-establishment of the first great choice, obscured and in part frustrated by sin and the fall, of the whole human race. Thus we read in the Genesis account of God's first call to Abraham that, 'in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed'.[2] It is with the object of reclaiming the whole human race for its creator that the chosen nation is chosen. This is perhaps the basic premise of the theology of the missionary movement in what must always be a missionary church. We do not belong to the chosen people that *we* may be saved, rather the chosen people is chosen out of the whole human race that *it* (i.e. the whole human race) may be saved.

At a later stage in the Old Testament this possible ambiguity becomes the theme of the great controversy which rends the first Israel of God. For it is at least possible, *prima facie*, to interpret the estate of God's Chosen People in terms of a narrow nationalist dogma of unique racial superiority and prestige—as perhaps in the Book of Ezra—and to transform it into a kind of theological justification for racial segregation and a perverted isolationism. The rejection of such an interpretation of the estate of the Chosen People becomes one of the highest themes of the Hebrew prophets in their supreme moments of inspiration. Thus deutero-Isaiah sees Israel as supremely 'a light of the Gentiles',[3] and Zechariah can dream of the golden climax of Israel's mission when 'ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.'[4]

There is no more pathetic fallacy than the idea that God's choice of the Chosen People turns it into a superior, uniquely

[1] 1 Tim. 2 : 4 [2] Gen. 12 : 3 [3] Isaiah 42 : 6 [4] Zech. 8 : 23

beloved nation. 'To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.'[1] It is essential to the state of the Chosen People that they are the recipients and the target of the scathing criticism and awful warnings of God's prophets. It is because Israel is God's Chosen People that the prophets of Israel must prophesy against it. 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities'.[2] And St. Paul, as he reflects upon the nature and the calling of the Church as the second Israel of God, finds that the mantle of the Hebrew prophets falls upon his shoulders so inevitably and appropriately as he does so that he can thunder forth the words of prophetic warning, 'If God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee'.[3] What is laid upon the Chosen People in God's choice is not a delightful and gratifying privilege but the terrible burden of responsibility of which the Chosen People so repeatedly prove themselves unworthy.

Before, however, we can consider that transition from the theme of the Chosen Nation to the theme of the Chosen Church which provides the Bible's most tremendous and epoch-making climax, we must glance at a subsidiary and kindred biblical theme in terms of which, and only in terms of which, can this transition be understood. I refer to the theme of the *remnant*.

The Remnant

In some ways the Old Testament concept of the remnant resembles Arnold Toynbee's 'creative minority'. The burden of Israel's responsibilities is carried and the true nature of Israel represented, not by Israel so to speak in the mass, but by the thin fine thread of prophecy that is woven into the texture of Israel's history. There is a great deal of truth in this contention. Though the institutions of contemporary constitutional democracy seem to place their emphasis on the rights and powers of majorities, we must never let this fact deceive us into forgetting that the values of democracy are represented and sustained by minorities and *élites*. However we define, locate and express the great values of human existence, of which the democratic way of ordering society must certainly be regarded as one, we cannot ignore the fact that the great majority of mankind neither understand nor value them very highly. This truth need not moderate

[1] Luke 12 : 48 [2] Amos 3 : 2 [3] Romans 11 : 21

our allegiance and commitment to the democratic idea, but it must to some extent shape and modify our interpretation of what democracy really is. It is an order of society which depends for its very existence and the enjoyment of all its values on the freedom and liveliness of its minorities. If the democratic state pays more attention to the majority than to the minority, the democratic society must compensate for this dangerously false emphasis by encouraging, enfranchising and reverencing its minorities. Otherwise the essential spirit of democracy is in mortal danger.

But the Old Testament idea of the remnant contains another element which takes us far beyond Toynbee's creative minority. The remnant is not so much the excellence which precedes the judgment, the redeeming feature which preserves the Chosen People from being altogether spewed out of God's mouth, it is also and more significantly the excellence which survives the judgment, the true Israel which is left standing after the false Israel has been shorn away. To some extent, we may add, the remnant is created by the judgment, for it is in the hour of crisis or judgment that men truly know and make manifest where they ultimately stand. Judgment is creative as well as revelatory.

In the story of the Garden of Eden there would seem humanly speaking to be no remnant at all, although in another sense we might just conceivably regard the Lord God Himself as the remnant of this primitive version of the Kingdom of God. It is perhaps better, however, to regard the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark as the first clearly explicit announcement of the remnant theme. Abraham was certainly a remnant, the survivor of the historic judgment which brought about the decline and downfall of Sumerian urban civilisation some four thousand years ago. We find a subtle variation on the remnant theme also in the story of the reduction of Gideon's army to a tiny and almost insignificant band of warriors. The Rechabites and the companies of the sons of the prophets are also versions of the remnant theme. Indeed prophecy is perhaps in the Old Testament the supreme function of the true remnant, as we see in the reiterated cry, ' Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets.' We have to accept the fact, however, that that is not the way in which God has created the human race or ordered the life of His Chosen People. Israel like all other human societies remains an area of culture in which ' there is no open vision ', and therefore stands

always in need of a ministry of spiritual leadership bringing with it a certain inevitable element of hierarchy into the divine society.

Particularly important is the way in which the remnant theme is brought out in the story of Elijah's despairing flight to the cave after his triumph on Mount Carmel. Reading this episode in the light of our knowledge of the New Testament it is difficult to resist the conclusion that Elijah's error was to say of himself what could truly be said only by the Christ. 'Even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.' [1] But the remnant has not yet shrunk to such minimal dimensions as these: 'Yet will I leave me seven thousand which have not bowed unto Baal.' [2] In the canonical prophets, particularly in Isaiah and deutero-Isaiah, the remnant is identified first with the Kingdom of Judah, left behind after the terrible judgment which has overtaken its sister Northern Kingdom, and later with the small band of exiles in distant Babylon who re-founded the spiritual life of Israel after the destruction of Jerusalem, and among whom the idea reaches perhaps its highest expression in the writings of that unknown prophet whom we call deutero-Isaiah. Later examples may be found in the Maccabees and their devoted followers, and in the spirited stories of Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, which express the ideals and underlying inspiration of the Maccabeean revolt.[3]

It is vital to our interpretation of the great transition in the New

[1] 1 Kings 19 : 10 [2] 1 Kings 19 : 18

[3] I am indebted to my colleague the Rev. Harvey Guthrie for the following note: In the Old Testament the four chief words used for remnant are, *yether*, *peletah*, *sarid*, *she'ar* (also *she'arith*). (a) *Yether*: used in the ordinary sense without any special theological significance as in Deut. 3 : 11; Josh. 12 : 14; 2 Sam. 21 : 2; 1 Kings 22 : 46, but in Zeph. 2 : 18 it is used in the theological sense. (b) *Peletah* is rare, see Ezekiel 14 : 22. (c) *Sarid*: Isaiah 1 : 9; Joel 2 : 32. (d) *She'ar* is occasionally used in the ordinary sense as in Ezra 3 : 8; Zeph. 1 : 4. Its use in a theological sense is more common: Isa. 10 : 20–22; Isa. 11 : 11, 16; Isa. 14 : 22; 16 : 14; 17 : 3. *She'arith* is almost always used in the theological sense as in Isa. 37 : 4; 37 : 32; 46 : 3; Jer. 23 : 3; 31 : 7; 42 : 2; 42 : 15; Ezek. 11 : 13; Micah 5 : 7–8; 7 : 18. (N.B. These lists are not complete.) The 'remnant' idea, however, is certainly much more widely used than the actual words; cf. The Noah episode, funnelling down of humanity to concentration on Abraham, saving of Moses as child, Samuel's survival of all of the house of Eli, etc. Indeed the whole idea is certainly present (as a sort of handmaid or partner of the doctrine of election) all through J, P and Deuteronomist history—often without the use of any of the specific words.

Testament from the Chosen People to the Chosen Church to understand that for the New Testament Christ crucified constitutes a remnant of one. The Christ on the cross could have spoken truly the words which Elijah spoke falsely. 'Even I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away.' Particularly in St. Mark's Gospel the passion is narrated in such a way as to make this vividly clear. Nobody lays such emphasis on the fact that His followers 'all forsook him and fled',[1] on the Lord's utter dereliction in the hour of death, so that even the two thieves crucified with Him retire into the background of the narrative. The despairing cry of Psalm 22 underlines the dereliction even more clearly. On the cross the Christ is utterly alone. The fourth gospel, of course, brings Mary and the Beloved Disciple to the foot of the cross, but in the fourth gospel the theological purpose which controls the form of the narrative, although equally legitimate and profound in its own way, is rather different. Thus in the passion Israel is reduced to one solitary figure, and after the passion Israel is no longer the visible natural Israel 'after the flesh' but the company of those who, having been incorporated into the Body of Christ, are bound up together in Him, by faith, by hope, by charity or *agape*, by baptism, by the eucharist, and, to sum up the whole matter, by all the mysteries which constitute what we may call Christian Churchmanship. This is perhaps the over-ruling theme in St. Paul's epistle to the Romans. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that the great central chapters of this epistle, in which St. Paul describes the way in which he himself experienced and discovered the tremendous transition which had taken place (chs. 5–8), have so caught the imagination of Christians as somewhat to obscure the argument of the epistle as a whole. Yet these chapters really constitute a kind of autobiographical digression in which the apostle describes the inner spiritual experience which led him to his great conclusion. The main point of Romans is that the Catholic Church is now the Israel of God, the true heir to the promises made to Abraham and the predestined instrument through which God will re-establish the purpose which He purposed in His first choice of the whole human race in Adam. Elsewhere St. Paul hails Jesus as the second Adam, in whom the purpose of God in creating the human race is reaffirmed, and from whom the recreated human race,

[1] Mark 14 : 50

which is the child of that purpose and the heir of God's promise, takes its origin.

The Church and the Person of Christ

Christian orthodoxy has always insisted strongly and vehemently on the complete and literal humanity of Christ. But many modern and contemporary theologians have misunderstood the purpose and the basic principle at stake in this insistence. Too often they have treated Christ's humanity as an exemplary humanity proposed, so to speak, in and by history for our imitation. No one would wish to deny all that is legitimate in this notion, but it is of itself woefully insufficient. The humanity of Jesus Christ means not only that He is one of us but also that we can become part of Him; not merely that in the order of history He belongs to the human race but rather that in the order of eternity the human race belongs to Him. The Christ is human primarily that men may enter His humanity, be lost and found and recreated in His humanity, and only secondarily and derivatively in order that men may imitate His humanity. We must even qualify the idea of the imitation by a further consideration. It is not so much the precise details of the human career of the earthly Jesus which must be imitated, but the love displayed by the pre-existent Son of God in consenting to the Incarnation and expounded in human terms in the Sermon on the Mount. Thus when St. Paul exhorts his converts at Philippi to display the virtue of humility, he points, not to some particular episode in which the earthly Jesus manifested His great and characteristic humility, but rather reminds them of the mysterious self-emptying of the Son of God. The imitation which is central to the nature of the Christian life is in fact an Imitation of Christ rather than an imitation of Jesus. It was too much stress on the literal imitation of the human career of Jesus, celibate and poverty-stricken, that led to the mediaeval 'double-standard' interpretation of the monastic life, and the later arrogance of the friars as they surveyed the monks who, as they thought, did not imitate Jesus so successfully as they did. (Obviously a criticism of any interpretation of the religious life which is put forward in terms of the doctrine of the double standard is not a criticism of the religious life itself. That God calls some men to live this kind of life in His service and to His glory is an obvious fact of Christian history and

existence which it would be arrogant, impertinent and ridiculous to doubt or deny. It remains true, however, that the doctrine of the double standard was a dangerous and vicious error which must be entirely repudiated in the interests of the integrity of the religious life itself.)

Thus we see that in the New Testament interpretation the humanity of Jesus is not merely a real and historical humanity in the more ordinary sense of the word—that would be to shrink this great conception to minute and trivial proportions—but it is also, and more importantly, the universal humanity in which God's purpose in making man is fulfilled, primarily because it is a humanity which dedicated itself utterly to becoming the instrument of God's will to set up His Kingdom. It is by incorporation into the body of Him who is the Eternal Man that we enter the Kingdom, becoming one indivisible humanity in the Christ.

There has been considerable discussion in recent books dealing with the biblical doctrine of the Church as to whether St. Paul's assertion that the Church is the Body of Christ is a metaphor or whether on the contrary it asserts a reality. It would seem to me that this is a quite false and misleading antithesis. No doubt poets sometimes employ metaphors simply because of the charm and gracefulness of the image which they conjure up, in which case we may call them literary conceits rather than serious metaphors. In the Bible, however, mere metaphor of this kind is rare. Obviously to call the Church the Body of Christ is in some sense to employ a metaphorical type of expression, but serious metaphor as distinct from literary conceit never merely asserts the metaphor but rather the reality which the metaphor expresses, in some cases indeed the reality to the expression of which this particular metaphor is altogether essential. There are of course other metaphors in scripture referring to the same organic kind of unity between Christ and His Christians (e.g. the vine and the branches) but certainly the Body of Christ is the most forceful and expressive of them all.

The body is an essential part of the whole man. Man from the biblical point of view is not a soul, or essentially discarnate being, who happens for a brief period to reside in a body; rather the body is an essential aspect or dimension of his entire existence. To say that the Church is the Body of Christ is to say that He is

entirely one with it, that the existence of the Church is an essential aspect or dimension of His existence. Certainly the New Testament, in another of its characteristic images, also describes the Church as the Bride of Christ, although less frequently. There is a difference of emphasis here, but nothing like an antithesis or even a paradoxical polarity. We must remember when we are thinking biblically that the bride is a true part of the body of the bridegroom, for Eve, the eternal and typical bride in the Eden myth, was created out of a part of Adam's body. We may even say that this biblical passage provides the proper foundation in Holy Scripture for all that is true and legitimate in any feminist movement. It means that woman is a true part of the human race, and not a kind of afterthought created for man's pleasure and service. When the New Testament speaks of husband and wife as one flesh the reference is always to this Genesis episode. To say that husband and wife are ' one flesh ' is not a kind of romantic interpretation of copulation, rather in the mood of D. H. Lawrence, but a reference to the creation of Eve out of Adam's rib. Thus the true bride is a part of the bridegroom's body, and so in Ephesians the unity of male and female in marriage can be used to illustrate the unity between Christ and His Body the Church.

The Church and Human Destiny

We are now in a position to see why God's third great choice of a people in Jesus Christ is essentially from the beginning the choice of the Catholic Church, for catholicity or universality is from the first its primary characteristic. This note is struck in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles by the narrative of the *glossolalia* or gift of tongues. From the point of view of biblical theology, which is searching for meanings rather than going into precise questions of historical fact, what we have to do in interpreting this episode is not to ask ourselves whether it really happened in the form which the author of the passage imagined—it was probably a phenomenon of a very different character—but why, believing that it happened in the way in which he narrates, he takes the trouble to set it down at such length. After all he must have been aware of other episodes which he did not bother to record at all, and there are few sections of the Acts of the Apostles on which he lavishes so much attention and enthusiasm. The primary

question here is not the question of precise historicity, but the question of the author's meaning and purpose. Many commentators have observed that what he seems to have in mind here is the curse of Babel, that what he is really saying is that with the preaching of the catholic gospel of the Catholic Church the curse of Babel is undone. This is the universal gospel, and through it and by baptism the whole of humanity may enter into the ranks of the Chosen People.

St. Paul speaks the same truth in different terms. 'There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.'[1] This catholicity or universality of the Church from the very beginning means rather more than being what we should nowadays call internationalist or cosmopolitan, although of course it certainly does include that. It would include also classlessness and the repudiation of all racial feeling, segregationalism and isolationism. Deeper down, however, it would transcend all its political and sociological implications in the fundamental 'Christ mysticism' of the New Testament, which sees the life of the Church as essentially a life lived hiddenly and profoundly in Christ. The Bible has included all human things together under the category of sin, and again under the category of redemption it includes all things together in the wide-open, all-embracing humanity of the Christ, 'without any difference or inequality'. 'Christ is all and in all',[2] 'You are all one in Christ Jesus'.[3] We may refer also in this connection to that strange and haunting passage, however great the difficulty which it presents to the interpreter, in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, which is certainly Paulinist if not Pauline. 'Till *we* all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto *a* full grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . . but . . . may grow up in all things into him, which is the head, even Christ.'[4] The suggestion seems to be that in Christ we become once more one indivisible human race, eternally subsisting as one humanity, which is His humanity because He is its head. To some extent the depths of this truth were rediscovered by that greatest and most prophetic of all Anglican theologians, Frederick Denison Maurice. Thus from

[1] Col. 3 : 11
[2] Col. 3 : 11
[3] Gal. 3 : 28
[4] Eph. 4 : 13–15

the biblical point of view Christ is both the culmination of human destiny and the essential ground upon which man's approach to his destiny is based. It is in Christ that man rediscovers his humanity, and in Christ that, at the point of man's ultimate culmination, all the latent potentialities of humanity will flower into being in the Kingdom of God. His humanity is our humanity and our humanity is His, and our invisible but fundamentally real participation in His humanity we call the Church.

The Church and the Kingdom of God

It is essential to emphasise at this point that the Church in the strict theological and biblical sense means much more than the visible Church militant here on earth. 'The Church' is a term which connotes the state of being in Christ, essentially a mystical and hidden condition. It denotes all those who are in Christ, in St. Paul's phrase 'alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord'.[1] Clearly this includes vast numbers of people who are now, from the point of view of biology and history and in any temporal frame of reference, dead. Yet God 'is not a God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto him'.[2] The Church is not only the fulfilment of history, it is also the transcendence of history. In the highest act of Christian worship, when we come together in the Spirit to adore the Father through the Son, we do so, in the words of the Anglican liturgy, 'with angels and archangels and all the company of heaven'. So history is at once fulfilled and transcended.

Tradition has spoken of three phases or aspects of the Church's being—the Church Militant, the Church Expectant, and the Church Triumphant. Of course we cannot interpret these three states or conditions of the Church in accordance with any temporal or geographical scheme, and the words and ideas themselves are not to be found in Holy Scripture, at all events not in that clear way. Nevertheless they have a profound biblical basis which may be discovered in the unforgettable, and rarely forgotten, passage at the close of 1 Corinthians 13. Here St. Paul speaks of the three supreme virtues of Christian existence—which are therefore the supreme virtues of the Church which is the *locus* of Christian existence—faith, hope and charity or *agape*. We may say that the Church Militant represents Christian existence primarily in

[1] Rom. 6 : 11 [2] Luke 20 : 38

the mode or under the category of faith. The Church Expectant, however, represents Christian existence primarily in the mode or under the category of hope. Traditional notions of purgatory have often most grievously misrepresented the notion of the Church Expectant by understanding it primarily in terms of punishment and painful purgation. No doubt such a perspective is not one entirely to be ignored, but these can never be the primary characteristics of the Church Expectant. Above all it refers to Christian existence lived in an atmosphere of serene hope and confident anticipation. Those who find themselves living under that condition or dimension of Christian existence which we call the Church Expectant well know that they will see the Church Triumphant beyond any possible shadow of doubt, so that already all anxiety is banished from their lives. This can hardly be an authoritative dogma, but it certainly constitutes a permissible theological speculation rounding out into completeness a Christian account of human destiny for which at other points there is ample biblical and existential evidence.

The Church Triumphant, otherwise and more biblically known as the Kingdom of God, represents Christian existence in the condition and under the category of absolute love. Of this ultimate reunification of mankind into one seamless and indivisible humanity, in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, and because in Christ therefore before the Father's face, one humanity caught up into the life of the Triune Godhead and transfigured into the Kingdom, we have already spoken. Here we must use, as the Bible does, the figures of verbal imagery, for these are things the like of which we scarcely know. Our Christian faith is in the ultimate and all-sufficing reality of love, and our Christian hope is for the ultimate and total triumph of love. Our faith and our hope are concentrated upon a kingdom whose outlines can be faintly discerned on the horizon of our vision but whose solid substance lies beyond that horizon. The rest must be silence, or if not silence at least some system of evocative words which fall into the province of the Christian poet—Dante is the supreme example—rather than into that of the Christian theologian.

What we have to consider now is the relation of the Church to this Kingdom. There are, of course, those who would distinguish radically between the Church and the Kingdom, interpreting the Church as no more than an earthly expedient, instru-

mental to the bringing in of the Kingdom in many important and significant ways, but emphatically not to be identified with it. To this contention there would seem to be three fundamental objections.

(*a*) Those who think and write in this way seem to mean by the word ' Church ' no more than that aspect of the Church's existence which is more properly entitled the ' Church Militant here on earth '. They seem either to lack any knowledge or recognition of the other phases of the Church's existence, or at least to ignore the way in which the Church appears to exist as a unity on all three levels of being, or in all three dimensions, concurrently.[1] Perhaps something like this recognition is implied in the fondness of such thinkers and writers for the traditional language which distinguishes between the ' visible ' Church and the ' invisible ' Church. This is not biblical language, and it would appear that we derive it primarily from the neo-Platonism of St. Augustine. No doubt, however, like a great deal of other non-biblical language in the Christian tradition, it can be given a biblical meaning. Those who rely upon it could justly claim that the visible Church means the Church on earth under judgment, whereas the invisible Church means the Church in Heaven after it has been purged by judgment. Yet even so difficulties about this particular form of non-biblical language remain. Of course it is true that the Church, considered as the Chosen People of God, is always under judgment, but this truth applies to some at least of those aspects of the Church's life which are to us invisible as well as to those which are visible here and now. On the other hand what this language calls the ' invisible Church ' is not intrinsically invisible, or invisible *per se*, but merely invisible to us. Of course, the friend who is at the moment on a large passenger liner crossing the Atlantic in order to visit me is for the moment invisible to me, but that does not imply that he is the invisible man. There is no part of the Church's life which is invisible *per se*, and yet at the same time all the deepest and most mystical aspects even of the life of the Church militant in the world are for the most part invisible to us here and now.

Perhaps the great mistake of those who persist with this unfortunate terminology is their habit of using it in such a way as somehow to suggest that the visible Church and the invisible

[1] As in Preface to the Canon in the Eucharist.

Church constitute two distinct Churches. I cannot think that they really mean this, but they frequently speak in a way which seems to imply it. If we must use this language—and there is surely much to be said for never using it at all—we must surely be careful to make it very clear that by the invisibility of the Church we refer always to the partial invisibility of the visible Church, and that by the visibility of the Church we have always in mind the superficial visibility of the invisible Church. For even the faintest suggestion of the existence of two separate Churches we have no possible biblical or theological warrant whatsoever. I conclude that the habit of so many theologians of distinguishing radically between the Church and the Kingdom of God can only be sustained by making an unwarranted and too radical distinction between the visible Church and the invisible Church, for certainly the invisible Church cannot be entirely dissociated from the notion of the Kingdom of God. If, however, we have no ground for making such a radical distinction between the visible Church and the invisible Church, then it is equally impossible for us to make a radical distinction between the Church and the Kingdom of God. On the other hand it is certainly true that some distinction of a less radical kind between the Church Militant here on earth and the Kingdom of God must be made.

(*b*) But there is a profounder objection to any theological writing off of the Church as a mere functional instrument. An intellectual operation of this kind is fundamentally contrary to the fundamental genius and bias of Christian thought in dealing with human affairs. For Christianity no man and nothing human can ever be interpreted merely in terms of its function. Christian thought must always make the passage from function to status. Man and human things must be interpreted in terms of being rather than in terms of mere instrumentality. Even man unredeemed and apart from Christ is always primarily an end in himself and only in a secondary sense a means. Redeemed man is obviously an end in himself, for it is as such that God treats him, and so also is the Christian Church. Because the human community is essentially an interlocking system of services rendered by each man to his fellows there is a sense in which men serve as the instruments of each others' purposes, but this is always and necessarily a subordinate aspect of the human reality. Indeed the human reality cannot even be interpreted as merely functional

to the purposes of God. 'The servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth . . . but I have called you friends'.[1] The category of instrumentality is an improper one in which to capture and define the essence of the human reality. Much more so is it inappropriate to our purposes when we seek to grasp the meaning and interpret the being of the Church of God.

Of course, and undeniably, the Church Militant is instrumental to many purposes both human and divine, and we must to some extent consider it under the category of instrumentality. But when we have fully listed what these purposes are to which the being of the Church is instrumental, we cannot but be led on further to ask what kind, or rather unique mode, of being that instrument must possess which is instrumental to such purposes as these. A hammer is instrumental to our purpose of hanging some pictures on the wall only because it is now and has been all the time a hammer, even at those times when we had no particular use for it at all. Similarly the Church is instrumental to the purposes which it serves only because it has all the time the form and being of the Church. Its being is at least as unique and important as those extraordinary purposes which it facilitates, and to the accomplishment of which it is essential. The category of instrumentality is in fact incapable of grasping the being of anything; the most that it can do is provide a list of its proper functions. I conclude that all functional definitions are inadequate. Certainly they owe more to John Dewey than to Holy Scripture.

(*c*) Of course we must in some way distinguish between the Church Militant as we now know it and the Kingdom of God. On the other hand we must always be careful not to turn the idea of the Kingdom of God into a wholly futuristic conception. Jesus Himself nearly always pictured it as in some sense already present. It 'is come upon you'; it 'is in your midst'; it 'is like such and such'. Certainly the powers of the Kingdom of God are already let loose wherever the Christ is, either in His flesh in the days of His Incarnation, or in the heart of the Church which is His historical Body. If it is correct to say that the Church Militant here on earth is not the Kingdom of God, it would be equally unsuitable to draw any absolute distinction between them. For the powers of the Kingdom are certainly let loose in the Body of Christ. On the other hand we must not ignore the extent to

[1] John 15 : 15

which the biblical idea of the Kingdom of God does contain futuristic elements. We must 'realise' our eschatology, but we cannot realise all our eschatology. In the biblical paradox the Kingdom of God is both present and future at the same time. My real quarrel with those who are content simply to deny that the Church is the Kingdom of God is not so much that their eschatology is either too 'realised' or too futuristic, but rather that they refrain from considering the question of eschatology at all. Indeed one of the great sins of so much traditional theology, whether Protestant or Catholic, is the fatal habit of considering and interpreting the biblical mysteries apart from the eschatological setting in which they are always given to us in the Bible itself. The distinction between the created reality as we now know it in this fallen world and the same created reality as we shall know it ultimately and eternally in the Kingdom of God is a valid but not an absolute distinction. Nor is the distinction between the Church Militant and the Kingdom of God the only distinction of this kind. Thus we may properly distinguish between the redeemed sinner here on earth and the perfected saint in heaven, and yet we cannot deny that they are both the same man.

It is only in the age of the eschaton, the ultimate consummation of all creation, that fallen things will at last manifestly *be* what they really are. We may distinguish between three approaches to the problem of defining an empirical reality. First there is what we may call *definition by origin*, in which we seek to understand what a thing is in terms of what it was at the point of its first appearance. Secondly, there is *definition by empirical description*, in which we understand what a thing is in terms of its present condition. Thirdly there is *eschatological definition*, in which we define a reality in terms of the way in which it will manifest itself at the point of its culmination. Thus man as we see him in the Bible is defined as innocent by the *definition of origin*, as fallen and a sinner when defined by *empirical description*, and as redeemed saint when we define him eschatologically. Similarly the Church must be defined as the Chosen People, when we are defining it in terms of its origin, as the Church Militant when defined by empirical description, and as the Kingdom of God when defined eschatologically. For at the point of its culmination in the age of the eschaton, at the point at which above all the Church reveals its

true nature, at that point precisely it will be seen to be the Kingdom of God. Clearly from the biblical point of view this third and last type of definition is immeasurably the most important, although, of course, the first and second types of definition are by no means of negligible value, so that we may well speak of the Church Militant here on earth, defined in terms of empirical description, as the Incarnation of the Kingdom of God, provided we are always careful to distinguish between the *Incarnation* of the Kingdom and the Kingdom of God itself in all its triumphant fulness.

My main contention here is that the moment we begin to use the word 'Church' in the proper biblical and theological sense, to mean that dimension or condition of human existence which is *in Christ* eternally, and cease to use the word merely to denominate the empirical Church known to human history—which should properly be referred to only as the Church Militant—then we are called upon to say things about the Church which banish any fundamental or radical distinction between the Church and the Kingdom outside the realms of rational possibility. What we have now to ask ourselves is precisely why it is that so many Christian theologians, and during so long a period of time, have thought it necessary to distinguish radically between the Church and the Kingdom of God, for though we may not agree with either their conclusions or their presuppositions, we may yet respect their motives, and show how justice may be done to such motives from within what may be called the biblical and Catholic position.

The grandeur and the misery of the Church

I have attempted in this chapter briefly to summarise and expound the biblical roots of the Catholic doctrine of the Church. I have tried to see it as one of the central themes of what we may call the great symphony of scripture, a theme first quietly announced in the opening chapter of the Bible and gradually swelling out through a long series of developing variations into the mighty climax of the vision of the Church Triumphant in the Book of Revelation. The reason why so many Protestant theologians fight shy, it seems to me, of this obviously biblical doctrine is the fear that it may be used to provide a kind of theological sanction or warrant for anything or everything that the visible Church in the world may attempt to do, and may be received by the faithful in

such a manner as to inhibit all prophetic criticism of the Church. I am going to argue that, on the contrary, it is precisely this doctrine of the Church which necessitates the prophetic criticism of the Church Militant, and indeed lends it all its sharpness and fire. It is precisely because the Church is so wonderful and sacred a mystery, both in the Bible and in Christian experience, that the persistent failure of the Church Militant in human history to make visible its own true character and nature is so shocking and scandalous. If the Church is taken to be a less great and transcendent reality in the first place, then surely we shall be less scandalised by the mediocrity of its performance in the second place. What gives rise to the prophetic protest is the sense of the immensity of the contrast between the nature and destiny of the Church on the one hand and its historical life on the other. The grandeur of the Church is the measure of its misery. The same thing is true in the case of human sin. A really deep sense of sin depends upon our believing at the same time in a genuinely Christian and biblical humanism. The depth to which historical and empirical man has fallen only shocks us as profoundly as it should if we are at the same time vividly aware of how glorious a thing it is to be a man, of the stature and dignity of human nature and of the splendour of its divinely ordained destiny. So Pascal could speak of the grandeur and misery of man. The misery is scarcely noticeable if we neglect or have forgotten the grandeur. Thus I venture to borrow this pair of terms from him in speaking of the analogous condition of the Church Militant.

We should completely misunderstand the Hebrew prophets if we supposed that their scathing criticisms and awful warnings really imply that they had a low view of Israel's nature, function and destiny as the Chosen People. On the contrary it was precisely because they took a supremely high view of these things that they were so utterly agonised and scandalised by the pitiful empirical realities which they saw before their eyes. The Hebrew prophets were not hostile to Israel, nor did they separate themselves from Israel. On the contrary the prophetic attack on Israel was motivated and suffused by passionate loyalty and burning love. It was precisely because Israel was the highest and noblest human thing they knew that its historical conduct and performance appeared to them to be the most contemptible human thing they knew. Always and necessarily the corruption of the

best thing in the world constitutes the worst thing in the world. Thus the grandeur of the Church, glimpsed in the biblical and Catholic doctrine of the Church, is the true ground of the prophetic criticism; it is that indeed which necessitates and requires the prophetic attack on the Church, always remembering that the genuinely prophetic attack on the Church comes from within the Church and is delivered in a mood of absolute loyalty and love. The moment the prophetic witness either becomes of its own volition, or is manoeuvred into becoming, a hostile attack on the Church delivered from outside the Church then it is corrupted at its very source and ceases to be a genuine prophetic witness at all. We may perhaps say that this is the tragedy which arises out of the Reformation and post-Reformation schisms, but of that we will speak in a later chapter.

Of course, from the point of view which we have established a great deal of even the most amply justified prophetic criticism of the Church is crudely phrased. Excited critics often declaim about what they call ' the failure of the Church ', but we must not use the idea of ' the failure of the Church ' as a kind of alibi by means of which to evade all responsibility for and consciousness of our own sin. Most of the time when we think of the failure of the Church what we really have in mind is the failure of the churchmen to do justice to and make manifest the nature of the Church, a failure of which we ourselves and millions like us are equally guilty. It is the task of the prophetic ministry to produce humility and penitence in the hearts of the churchmen, but it will hardly succeed in doing this unless first of all there is humility and penitence in the heart of the prophet himself. The corruption of the prophetic witness really begins when the prophetic message, whether or not it produces humility and penitence in the minds of those who hear it, contributes to the building up of self-righteousness and pharisaism in the mind of the prophet through whom it comes. Alas, this has happened too often in human society. If it is all too possible for the visible Church Militant to become corrupted in and by the course of its historical existence, it is equally possible for the prophet to be corrupted even as he points his accusing finger at the Church's corruption. Wherever and whenever the prophetic witness is given in a mood less than one of absolute loyalty and love this is the kind of tragedy that is almost bound to occur.

Akin to this failure to perceive that the Catholic doctrine of the Church provides the prophet with his biblical charter and essential presupposition, is the feeling of so many Protestant theologians that such a doctrine as ours points towards a dogmatic institutionalism. The purpose and drift of the Catholic doctrine of the Church is not the validation of its institutions. Indeed, if the biblical and Catholic doctrine of the Church which we have outlined in this chapter is accepted, then in the light of it we are bound to say that the Church in its essence is not an institution at all but a mystical condition or dimension of human existence. The Church is the Body of Christ, and the Body of Christ is most emphatically not an institution capable of sociological analysis. The Church Militant may, indeed it must, in order to equip itself for participation in human history, possess and use institutions; it may even be that some, a very few, of these institutions are essential to the very being of the Church Militant; but nevertheless we must insist that even the Church Militant is not to be identified with its institutions, nor can it rightly be defined in terms of its institutions. The Church Militant is that phase or aspect of the whole Body of Christ—essentially as we have seen a mystical condition—which operates visibly in the dimension of human history. Institutionalism is only possible when we commit the error of neglecting or ignoring the mystical character of the Church and, having first identified the Church with the Church Militant, we then proceed either to identify the Church Militant with its institutions or, worse, to define the Church Militant in terms of its institutions.

We may instance here the errors of Romanism and Congregationalism. One historical institutional instrument of the Church of God of the utmost importance in history has undoubtedly been the papacy. The papacy, considered as an institution, has often functioned badly, but even the most vehement anti-romanist, at all events in his most honest moments, must admit that it has sometimes functioned extremely well, and at many turning points in Christian history has been supremely and obediently instrumental to the service of the purposes of God. The error of the Romanists is not so much the error of having clung with so much devotion and loyalty to this institution, but rather the error of having attempted in their theology to interpret the Church in terms of this institution, so that the institution is taken to be the

master rather than the servant of the Church Militant, and indeed as the constitutive principle of its essential life. This is an error which those of us who cling to what I have called the biblical and Catholic doctrine of the Church must most strenuously resist, and, for the sake of the Catholic doctrine of the Church, repudiate in season and out of season.

A similar error is to be found among the Congregationalists. Another very important institution which the Church Militant possesses and uses is that of the congregation or parish. Undeniably it has often functioned in Christian history very badly, and indeed has been the source of many terrible corruptions. On the other hand it has often functioned superbly well, and no sane Christian, whatever his situation is in our contemporary divided Christendom, would even dream of dispensing with it. The error of Congregationalism is not that of clinging to this particular institution with loyalty and love, but of insisting on defining the Church in terms of it and treating the local gathering of Christians as though it were the essential constitutive principle of the Church Militant. From the point of view of our analysis in this chapter we are bound to repudiate Congregationalism as vehemently as we must reject papalism, and for the same reason.

The truth is that the danger of institutionalism in our conception of the Church, and in our management of its life, is at its greatest when the doctrines which apprehend and define the true glory of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ are neglected and forgotten. Once we have turned our backs on the essential glory of the Church, which is the glory of the Church's abiding essence, then from such a perverted point of view nothing appears to remain of the Church except its characteristic institutions, and we may easily be led into supposing that the proper work of the Church Militant is simply to keep these institutions operating in a sociologically healthy condition. We must always remember, as the great institutions of the Church pass by in a resounding and imposing parade, that the Lord Himself is not in the institutions; rather it is in the still small voice of the doctrine that the word of the Lord is repeatedly given.

The singularity of the Church

The Church is always *the* Church; the concept of *a* church or a plurality of churches any one of which may properly be regarded

as *a* church, is theologically inadmissible. The task before the theologian when he seeks to expound the doctrine of the Church is emphatically not that of excogitating some definition of the Church in accordance with whose terms he can set about deciding which of the various Christian bodies, each of which claims to be *a* church, may have its claims accepted. Like all singulars the Church is incapable of definition. We can enter into and expound the heart of the mystery but we cannot define its limits. For any definition which purports to define the limits of the mystery really implies that the mystery is not, in the last analysis, a mystery at all. The behaviour of Romanist theologians is at this point peculiarly perverse and frustrating. They begin well by insisting, as we have felt compelled to insist, that the Church is *the* Church, and by rejecting the pluralistic concept of *the churches*, each of which is *a* church. But apparently they fail to perceive that once they have declared the absolute singularity of the Church they have ruled out the possibility of defining the Church, and they pass on to a definition of the Church, as the communion of all those who are in communion with the Bishop of Rome, as though the word church were after all a kind of class name for a class which quite accidentally happens to possess only one member. This is an unfortunate procedure which crops up too often and all over the place in much of our traditional theology. It must be accepted that the principle of the absolute singularity of the Church eliminates all possibility of its definition. The unity of the Church must be interpreted in terms of the absolute ascendency of its one Lord and, so far as the Church Militant is concerned, in terms of the historical continuity of its life. This is to describe rather than to define the being of the Church. It is, of course, the function of a prophetic theology to explore the meaning of the characteristics which the historical description of the Church presses upon our attention (e.g. the episcopate), but this is to *interpret* the Church as a great God-given fact rather than to define it as a merely human idea. The mystery of the Church itself eludes all possibility of definition. The significance of this principle for the ecumenical movement, and for the interrelationship of what are most misleadingly called ' the churches '—in a sense, of course, utterly remote from that in which the New Testament frequently uses the phrase ' the Churches ', merely to indicate that the one Church exists in many

different communities and places—must be considered in a later chapter. Here it is sufficient for our purposes to note that the singularity of the Church is the logical implication of the biblical assertion of its absolute unity. 'One Church, one faith, one Lord . . .' The Church is always *the* people of God never *a* people of God, always *the* Church Militant never *a* church militant; always *the* Church Expectant, never *a* church expectant, always *the* Church Triumphant, never *a* church triumphant; always and at once both the instrument and the embodiment of the one eternal purpose of the One Eternal God.

2

THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH MILITANT

THE Church essentially speaking is not an institution. But the matter or stuff of the historical existence of the Church Militant is nevertheless institutional. To survive with enduring identity, to maintain continuity through history, to change and yet remain the same thing, the Church, although not an institution, must yet possess and use social institutions, for institutional continuities are both the means and embodiment of historical survival. Nevertheless the essence of the Church must not be identified with its institutions, nor can it be conceived and defined in terms of them.

Many, indeed most, of the institutions of which the Church has possessed itself and which it has employed as means to its own ends during the course of its history, are in the strict sense of the words optional and accidental, and in no way essential to its nature. Institutions like the parish and the papacy have arisen and flourished, not so much because of anything the Church essentially and eternally is, but rather because the world in which the Church Militant finds itself situated has certain characteristics of its own which partly determine the modes of its relationship with the Church. The world is one world and it is again and again necessary that the Church as a unity should address the world as a unity. Institutions like the papacy and, in the twentieth century, the World Council of Churches, have come into being in order to meet this obvious need.

On the other hand the world is also a great complex of semi-independent, semi-isolated localities, and parochial and congregational units have come into existence in order that the Church may be represented in every locality. One of the enduring problems of the Church Militant throughout its history has been this embarrassing necessity of contriving to be local in each locality and at the same time visibly one over all the earth. It is

difficult but not impossible to discharge both these duties at the same time. Obviously, in the modern period since the Renaissance and the Reformation, Christianity has been much more successful in making itself local in each locality than in making itself visibly one over all the earth, so that nowadays, with the coming of the ecumenical movement, this second task tends to be uppermost in our minds. Nevertheless our primary duty is to be both of these things at the same time, and there is always great danger in any kind of success in the one sphere which is somehow achieved at the cost of failure in the other.

The chief question before us in this chapter, however, is this: Are there any facets of the structure of the Church Militant which are essential to its nature or, on the contrary, must we say that all the institutions of the Church Militant are equally accidental and optional? I shall argue that there are a very few institutions which are necessary and essential. I am going to describe these necessary and essential institutions as those which constitute the indispensable theological *structure* of the Church, and I am going to contrast them with other institutions which, however valuable, are not indispensable to its structure, but together constitute what I shall call its *polity*.

The distinction between structure and polity

The Church is not a democracy but a theocracy. In the Church man abdicates his arrogant claim to sovereignty, and worships and adores the absolute sovereignty of God. We may well say that it is only this theocratic attitude towards life which sanctions and upholds the values of earthly democracy at any sufficiently deep philosophical level, but we must add that nevertheless the Church in the last analysis is theocratic and not democratic. On the other hand it is true that many Christian bodies and communions, particularly in the area of Western civilisation, do employ democratic institutions and procedures which they have incorporated into their ecclesiastical constitutions. To refer only to Anglican examples, there is the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States and the Church Assembly in England set up by the Enabling Act of 1919. Analogous institutions can be found in almost all Anglican churches, and indeed in many others. They have the advantage of enabling us to carry on much that is important in the corporate life of the

Church in a manner to which the citizens of democratic countries are accustomed; they have the even more important advantage of manifesting the wholeness of the Church by drawing the laity into a real share in the responsibilities otherwise borne by members of the ordained ministry alone. Nevertheless we cannot say that institutions such as these are essential to the Church's nature.

It might be argued on their behalf that the laity have a right to consultation, but the Church of God is not properly speaking an area of community in which any man or group of men can claim to have any rights at all. Men have no rights against God, and the divine sovereignty is always absolute and unfettered. This is not, of course, in any way to belittle such institutions. They are certainly not infallible or theologically authoritative; they are corruptible and exist like everything in the Church Militant under the judgment of God. But their usefulness to the Church when they work well is obvious. It is absurd, however, to suggest that their existence turns the Church into a democracy, or that they have any profound theological sanction. At the present time the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States contains no women members. I was once asked by an enthusiastic lady whether there was any deep theological reason why the General Convention should refuse to admit women. I replied quite frankly that I could not even think of any deep theological reason why there should be any General Convention at all! We neither have nor require any profound theological sanction for the details of ecclesiastical polity. Matters like these are in their very nature optional and peripheral. Canonists and ecclesiastical lawyers no doubt find them very interesting—and they are certainly important—but to the theologian they have no particular significance.

I have already remarked that the representation of the laity is desirable. Wherever the laity is able and willing to accept its proper measure of pastoral, evangelistic and theological responsibility it is both futile and wrong to deny such representation. On the other hand it is in no way essential to the life and integrity of the Church Militant, and there exist areas of the Church's life, for example missionary Churches ministering to simple and undeveloped peoples, in which nothing of the kind is for the moment even possible. Where it is possible it is always desirable; nowhere is it essential.

Similarly the precise organisation of congregations and parishes is always a matter of optional polity, never of essential structure. Of course, local congregations and parishes will always be found in the Church, so long as the great majority of men continue to inhabit the same locality during prolonged periods of their lives. We could easily imagine, however, a nomadic period of almost universal human mobility in which the local congregation and parish would become an entirely irrevelant and meaningless institution. That anything like this will ever happen is highly improbable but not altogether impossible. Certainly men in the civilised world tend to be much more mobile than they were, and even the relatively small degree to which this is true has put very heavy pressures on the parochial system.

Similarly again with the papacy. Obviously I reject papalism, which seems to me a futile attempt to bolster up a detail of the Church's polity with misleading and bogus theological sanctions. A theology of the papacy is as inadmissible as a theology of General Convention or the Church Assembly. On the other hand, while rejecting papalism, I should not be altogether opposed to the papacy itself considered as a political institution. Certainly a reunited Christendom would have to devise something very like the papacy to express and make manifest its unity face to face with the unity of the world in which such a reunited Christendom would have to operate. In such circumstances it might be wise to retain a reformed papacy rather than to improvise some entirely new, *ad hoc* institution having no deep roots in Christian history.

Of course it will be said that in the past the papacy has been corrupted. Quite frankly in the past all Christian institutions whatsoever, reformed or unreformed, have again and again been corrupted and fallen under the judgment of God. The Church must have and use human institutions; they will be always corruptible and sometimes corrupted. If the Church Militant may rightly be spoken of as the incarnation of the Kingdom of God we must always remember that it is and will continue to be the incarnation of the Kingdom of God in a fallen world. We can never hope to escape the consequences of the Fall merely by changing our polities or devising new institutions. The belief that we can avoid the consequences of the Fall by devising new social institutions may be described as the gross and persistent

error of the reforming type of mind. The reformer's proper task is to reform what is given to him, what is set before him by history, not to devise new corruptible institutions which will certainly prove themselves no better than those which he endeavours to replace. If the Reformation expressed a great Christian truth, as in my view it certainly did, it is equally true to say that that great truth was corrupted and impeded by the various institutional systems which arose side by side with the reformers' passionate and valid insistence on the primacy of the Gospel, and finally, in the work of so many of their successors, began to seem more important than their essential message. The Reformation institutions and systems gradually hedged around and concealed from view that which was most of all valid and important in the Reformation message. Reformation properly understood is not institutional novelty and institutional change, but rather a renewal of institutions which is essential to their growth and continuity.

On the other hand the Church Militant does require at the very heart of its life some detail of structure which will make plain its essentially theocratic character and the reality of its dependence on the divine initiative. This essential structural detail must also make plain the continuity of the Church Militant through the dimension of time and its unity across the dimension of space. The historical dimensions of space and time will, of course, impose many changes and variations upon the Church's outward form, but it is fundamentally necessary that in the midst of all the changes and variations there should function and flourish some characteristic which makes equally visible the fact that beneath all these changes and variations the Church remains essentially one. We must always lay great emphasis on the notion of space–time, rather than space *and* time or time alone, as the true dimension in which the life of the Church Militant flourishes. History happens in space–time, not in time alone. The Church exists both in space and time but these are twin aspects of a single dimension. Indeed it may be said that the great error of the contemporary ecumenical movement in Christendom is the extent to which it has concentrated on restoring the visible unity of the Church in space without any equal and parallel concentration on the visible restoration of the continuity of the Church through time. It is perhaps in this way that the problem of the episcopal ministry or the historic episcopate should be posed, and in this context that

we should estimate its relevance to the whole question of Christian reunion.

The historic episcopate

The question of the historic episcopate, and of its necessity to the integrity of the Church of God, has for too long been left in the hands of ecclesiastical historians, or of theologians with a primarily historical conception of their task. Erudite investigations of the structure of the primitive Church have understandably led to no very clear conclusions. Undoubtedly there were many anomalies during the first few generations of Church history, and no absolutely clear pattern to which all conformed can be established as beyond all controversy. More significant is the universal convergence upon some form of episcopal order as, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Church Militant gradually became more clearly aware of its nature and character. It is the massive unanimity of the Church in this matter from the third to the sixteenth century which is so impressive a feature of the historical record. Nor must we forget that even since the sixteenth-century Reformation the overwhelming majority of Christians throughout the world have firmly maintained the episcopal structure. Even today it remains an obvious fact that there can be no recovery of the unity of Christendom without a return to the episcopal structure, so that the main task of an ecumenical movement which really means business is to assist those parts of Christendom which have lost the episcopal structure in what is for them the somewhat difficult and embarrassing task of regaining it, in defiance of much that runs very deep in their own sectional traditions but in obedience to much that lies even deeper in the history of Christendom as a whole. To restore episcopal structure where it has been lost is to restore that visible continuity of contemporary Christendom with its past and into its future which is essential to any recovery of its visible unity across the dimension of space.

A more theological approach, though one still greatly indebted to the historians, is the effort of a not inconsiderable number of theologians in the Anglican communion to commend the episcopate by arguing that while it is not essential to the *esse* or being of the Church Militant to possess the episcopate it is nevertheless essential either to its *bene esse*, or well-being, or to its *plene esse*, or

fulness of being. It must be confessed that neither of these approaches is very convincing intellectually, or likely to have any very important practical results. The distinction between *esse* on the one hand and *bene* or *plene esse* on the other suggests a kind of minimum definition of the Church with which God will be satisfied contrasted with a kind of perfection of the Church which is what God really wills and desires. In some ways this rather recalls the 'double-standard' mediaeval theology of the 'religious life'. The whole approach is radically unsatisfactory. Surely what God wills is the well-being of the Church Militant in the most complete and concrete sense of the term. He will not be satisfied with any kind of second best, and nor in consequence can we. This theory is unlikely to have any very great practical effect because if, at the outset of the discussion, we tell our non-episcopal brother Christians that the episcopate is not really necessary—only very nice—we must not be surprised if they reply that in that case there seems to be no very compelling reason why they should take it back into their Church structure. It would certainly appear that this approach is as unlikely to produce either conviction or results as the previous attempt to solve the problem in terms of historical investigation. Clearly what is called for is some fresh initiative which will entirely transform the terms of the whole controversy.

But the first question to be considered—and it is a purely theological one—is whether or not the Church Militant is a reality of such a character as to call for and require a visible form of structure which shall at the same time both make plain its theocratic nature, and the reality of the divine initiative in the heart of its life, and also function historically as the organ of its unity across the dimension of space and continuity through the dimension of time. If we can answer this question in the affirmative, if we can say that the very nature of the Church Militant does call for and require a structural characteristic possessing this symbolic import and performing this particular historic function, then I think there can be no doubt that the only form of structure known to Christian history which is capable of playing these distinct and contrasted yet kindred roles is the one which has already played them for so long in the past, the historic episcopate, which is indeed the only possible candidate for these particular offices and functions. The Church must make plain its nature in its structure, and fulfil its nature through its structure, and to accept

Christian history as a manifestation of God's will in these matters is to reflect one of the fundamental biblical and prophetic attitudes.

It is strange that this important biblical consideration is so rarely referred to in current discussions of the nature and form of the Church's ministry. That the revelation of God comes to his people through the events that compose their history, and through their experience of surviving a continuous succession of crises and emergencies, is nowadays almost universally regarded by theologians as essential to any biblical understanding of revelation. Certainly we apprehend this great truth primarily through the biblical account of that revelation to the first Israel which culminates in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. But are we to understand that the historic experience of the second Israel has no revelatory character or function at all? Such a conclusion seems incredible. If the revelation to the first Israel is one which leads up to and culminates in the absolute revelation in the Christ, surely it is equally true that through the vicissitudes of its history the second Israel, the Catholic Church, slowly learns to understand more and more profoundly the depths of the meaning of its new life ' in Christ '. That God wills the organic conditions of the unity and continuity of His Church on earth, and that a terrible judgment, bringing with it spiritual impotence and historic catastrophe, falls upon us when we neglect and ignore His Will in this matter, is surely the obvious lesson which Christendom must learn from its tragic history in the modern period. To receive its history humbly and penitently as indeed a revelation and a judgment from God is surely the only possible attitude for a truly biblical and prophetic Christianity.

It may be argued by some theologians that the unity and continuity of the Church is of a purely spiritual character, requiring no visible organ of expression, and that similarly its theocratic constitution and dependence on the divine initiative are to be found precisely at the point at which the Church is paradoxically seen to be an invisible and mystical reality. To this it must be replied that the Christian faith is misinterpreted if we treat it as though it were a form of spiritual religion. From the point of view of biblical faith the visibilities of this world are as true and essential a part of God's creation as the invisibilities. More than that, the visibilities and invisibilities compose one unified creation in its integrity. Our task in a creation which has been split and

has lost its integrity as the result of the Fall is to reunite the visible and the invisible in patterns of sacramental action which fulfil the essential spirit of the liturgy, while, of course, going far outside it in their range and scope. We have ' to gather into one all things in Christ ' [1] who, we must always remember, is Lord of the cosmos as well as Lord of the human race, a cosmological as well as an existential figure.

It is characteristic of biblical religion that it never defines the Holy Spirit, and the spiritual ways of life which exist and flourish under His leadership and government, by a process of exclusion. There are many people who in effect do adopt this procedure. They point to one aspect of life after another, politics, economics, art, sometimes, but more rarely, even public morality, and say, in effect: ' This is not spiritual, let us get down to the essential spiritual question.' But what is the essential spiritual question which survives after all real questions have been excluded? One is reminded of the great scene in Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* in which the hero peels off the layers of the onion one by one in the search for some essential kernel of the onion which shall symbolise the essence of his own selfhood. To his surprise and consternation he finds that when all the layers of the onion have been peeled off nothing whatever remains.

I recollect years ago, at the beginning of the great depression in England, visiting a small industrial town in the north of the country in order to preach at what was called a Student Mission. The town to which I was sent was already hard hit by the prevailing economic conditions. Its small factories and the local mine were closed, and the bulk of the inhabitants unemployed, with very little visible prospect at that time of ever being employed again. My hostess, however, was a fairly well-to-do lady, the source of whose prosperity was completely external to the local economy, so that she was relatively untouched by her neighbours' troubles. At eight o'clock on Sunday morning she and I went to communion in the parish church at which I was to preach later in the day. The congregation was quite good, but the patched clothes and pinched, undernourished faces spoke eloquently of the ordeal through which the people of the place were passing. As we were returning I expressed with youthful ardour the thoughts which were uppermost in my mind. I could not but contrast the

[1] Eph. 1 : 10

excellent breakfast which my hostess would certainly set before me with the kind of bare repast which our fellow communicants would find awaiting them in their homes. 'Why', I said in the mood of sadness which possessed me, 'it seems somehow incompatible with the fellowship which we have had together in the Lord's Service.' Somewhat troubled, my hostess paused and poked the paving stones at her feet with the point of her umbrella. 'Yes,' she replied, 'but the fellowship's *only* spiritual, isn't it?'

I have never forgotten that devastating reply. *Only* spiritual, not real. The experience has given me a horror of any purely spiritual religion ever since. It is incompatible both with the Bible and with the traditional sacramental worship of the Church. We cannot sanctify and use in the service of the glory of God the visibilities of this life while we are in church, and yet at the same time be content to leave them wholly unsanctified wherever we find them outside the church. Sacramental worship demands prophetic fervour, or its essential character is negatived and frustrated. Woe indeed to those who receive the Sacraments and will not heed the prophets, for they know not of what spirit they are!

In the Bible and the liturgy our Lord the Holy Spirit manifests His reality by demonstrating His power to move and dispose the visible and material in His service. The Holy Spirit must be understood not in terms of exclusion but in terms of inclusion. The Scripture, we may say, has concluded and compounded together all the things of this life under the Lordship of the Spirit. He is as much the master of visible things like social institutions, and the instrumentalities through which societies maintain continuity through the generations, as He proves Himself the master of things like water, bread and wine, and men and women, in the liturgy. He disposes all things well, the invisibilities of this life in the mystical depths in which they have their being and the visibilities of this life through the patterns of sacramental action in which they fulfil themselves. The Catholic faith, with its sacramental way of life, is a prophetic faith or it is nothing. I conclude that any proposal to establish a purely spiritual Christianity is a proposal to cut Christianity off from its roots in the Bible and in the long traditions of liturgical and sacramental life in the Church. The demand that we should make our invisibilities visible in and through our visibilities is the basic demand

which God makes of the Church Militant. If the Church as a whole is a mystical conception, it is equally true that the Church Militant is a sacramental conception.

Perhaps we may say that the long theological controversies and the seemingly endless theological discussions of these questions have been haunted, frustrated and even bedevilled by a failure on the part of the contributing theologians to keep steadily and clearly in mind the important distinction between the Church and the Church Militant. Of course the Church considered as a whole is a mystical conception, but, within the orbit of the all-embracing doctrine of the Church as the mystical Body of Christ, there are still things which must be said about the character of the Church Militant which cannot be said of the Church as a whole, and equally things which must be said of the Church as a whole which cannot, without careful qualification, be asserted of the Church Militant. Within the unity of the whole Church of Christ the Church Militant has its own essential and indelible characteristics. Of these the first and most important is its sacramental or incarnate character. If we neglect the fundamental importance of this distinction we shall attempt to press upon the Church Militant the attributes of the Church as a whole in such a way as to rob it of its own proper characteristics. Because the Church as a whole is mystical and hidden, we shall be led on to say, therefore, the Church Militant cannot be sacramental and visible. This is to ignore the way in which the Church Militant accommodates the present being and nature of man. That present being and nature of man is inherently sacramental, a union of visible and invisible which demands to be embodied in a complete integrity of the two. Man needs sacraments in his present condition because in his present condition he *is* a sacrament, and all things human necessarily sacramental. Of his future condition we cannot yet speak, but his present condition is obvious to us all. It is this sacramental phase of human existence that the Church Militant is designed to accommodate, and thus it is that it necessarily presents itself, both to those who belong to it and to those who merely observe it functioning in history, as an integral union of visibilities and invisibilities in which the latter express themselves through the former.

The many Protestant theologians who fail to give this distinction the weight it demands find themselves at times using the phrase

'the Church' as though it meant no more than the Church Militant, and at other times discussing the Church Militant in terms of the ultimate doctrine of the Church as a whole. At one moment they insist that the necessary visibilities of the Church Militant are ultimately theologically insignificant, and at the next moment they seem to suppose that these visibilities, or at all events such visibilities as their own traditions possess, together compose the whole of the Church. But the distinction is quite fundamental and essential to any kind of theological articulation and precision. We must have the doctrine of the unity of the whole Church, considered as the mystical Body of Christ, in order to assign to the Church Militant its proper and subordinate place within that unity. But at the same time we need equally a just concept of the character of the Church Militant, with all its distinguishing marks, in order to be able to see precisely what its proper and subordinate place within that unity must be. True unity is never the unity of identicals; true unity is always the unity of things that differ and which, precisely because they differ in the way they do, harmoniously compose a single pattern. The doctrine of the Church Militant is thus distinct from the doctrine of the Church, although always subordinate to it.

But once we have indicated the sacramental character of the Church Militant and linked it up with the present sacramental phrase of human existence we shall see at once why it is that the major characteristics of the Church Militant—unity, continuity, theocracy and ceaseless dependence on the divine initiative—require and must have sacramental expression and embodiment. Our invisibilities must be made visible in the pattern of our existence. We have now to consider how it is that the historic episcopate, and in the history of Christendom the historic episcopate alone, expresses these truths and fulfils these functions.

The Episcopate and the Church Militant as an Order of Creation

Like the order of nature the order of the Church is a created realm of secondary instrumental causes. In classical Christian philosophy the order of nature is a genuine order of real things, possessing an integrity or completeness of its own. It may be validly and intelligibly studied exclusively in terms of that integrity, and yet at the same time it is never a closed order. The notion that if the order of nature may with complete intelligibility

and usefulness be studied exclusively from the point of view of its integrity, and in abstraction from that on which it ultimately depends, it therefore follows that it must be a closed system, is the radical error of the kinds of philosophy described by such terms as 'scientism' or 'naturalism'. These, of course, are both metaphysical theories and have nothing to do with positive natural science whatsoever. Such theories are not science, but rather dubiously metaphysical ways of making a god out of science, whereas true science never makes a god out of itself. A creaturely, dependent order, possessing and existing in an integrity of its own in due subordination to that on which it depends, may be studied from two different points of view. It can be examined, as science examines nature, from the point of view of its integrity or interpreted, as Christian philosophy interprets nature, from the point of view of its dependence. Whenever we are dealing with a created order not only are both these standpoints equally permissible, they are both vitally necessary. The integrity of the system under investigation never implies that it is a closed system. The dependence of an order of creatures on its creator is indeed the ultimate basis of its integrity as an order of creatures. The integrity of the order is not the antithesis of its dependence on that which transcends it, on the contrary the dependence is ultimately the constitutive principle of the integrity. It is an integral system precisely because it is a dependent system, all the parts equally depending upon the one ultimate reality, so that they are functionally as well as causally related.[1] At every point it is open to the initiative and contingent upon the activity of that which at once transcends it and yet is at the same time immanent within it. Similarly the concept of the secondary cause is not the antithesis of the concept of the primary cause. On the contrary, the secondary cause is the instrument of the primary cause, and as its instrument it participates in the reality of the primary cause in a

[1] The distinction between functional and causal relation may not at first sight be obvious to the reader without philosophical training. The following example may assist him to understand that there may be other significant relations between things apart from the causal. In countries in which the winter is severe both central heating and fur coats are common. It cannot be pretended that severe winters are the cause of central heating and fur coats, still less that fur coats cause central heating or central heating fur coats, nevertheless there is a relationship between them, which makes their coincidence intelligible, a relationship which may be described as functional rather than causal.

quasi-mystical manner. Indeed the participation of the positively known secondary cause in the absolute activity of the primary cause suggests that even the life of physical nature is shot through and through with analogies to the mystical condition of human existence, in which the creature is at the time wholly itself and yet at one with the Creator.

As with the order of nature so, and even more obviously, with the order of the Church. For the Church also is an order of secondary causality. The Church Militant has an apparent or phenomenological integrity of its own. Yet in the Church Militant the secondary causes, being human and self-conscious agents, are always aware that they are the instruments of the primary cause and that they participate in the activity of the primary cause. Certainly the Church Militant knows itself to be anything but a closed system; it is always open to the divine initiative. This is particularly clear in the case of the great liturgical mysteries which constitute the very core of the life of the Church Militant. These liturgical mysteries are always enacted or performed by men, yet the agent is always God Himself. Among the most important of these enacted liturgical mysteries is the way in which the Christian ministry is renewed in ordination from generation to generation. Ordination is the sacrament of the divine initiative. In ordination the primary cause of the Church's life is seen continually renewing the secondary causes which in their integrity compose its continuity. In ordination God is openly confessed as the One Lord of the Church, which cannot even be continued through time or extended across space merely by human volition and enthusiasm. It is the primary cause that is the essential constitutive principle of the web of secondary causes which in their orderly togetherness and continuity, constitute the phenomenological integrity of the historic Church. Not only is public ordination vital to the Church's life, continually making manifest the divine initiative in the Church's history as the essential principle constitutive of its existence, we must add that some one basic principle and manner of ordination is essential if we are to make visible the Church's integrity. No doubt many different modes of ordination (e.g. the Presbyterian as well as the Episcopal) would serve to make clear the fact of the Church's dependence on the divine initiative, to which it is continually open, but a plurality of modes of ordination do not make

it equally clear that this divine initiative is the constitutive principle of the Church's integrity.

One is reminded of the obvious objection to the various heretical systems of Manichean dualism which interpret the creation as we know it as the work not of one Creator but of two. Such theories destroy the integrity of the universe. Indeed for metaphysical dualism, as for any kind of pluralism, the universe is not in the last analysis a universe at all. It may superficially appear to be a universe but fundamentally it is an anarchy. Similarly, if we allow in any way for a plurality of modes of ordination, all of them equally permissible, not only is the appearance of any integrity in the Church Militant lost to sight but the reality of its integrity is denied. To say that the Church Militant has an integrity which cannot be made visible implies that it has no real integrity at all. Integrity is precisely the kind of thing that can and must be made visible. The sacrament of science makes visible the integrity of nature; so also the sacrament of episcopal order makes manifest the integrity of the Church Militant.

No doubt the validity of this argument, which may seem to some readers a somewhat difficult and obscure one, depends on the validity of some kind of analogy between the order of nature and the order of the Church. It would seem to me that the analogy is valid and indeed necessary because both these orders are orders of creatures. Perhaps some theologians might be disposed to suggest that whereas the order of nature is a reality which can only be properly studied and analysed in terms of secondary or horizontal causality, the order of the Church Militant must be considered exclusively in terms of primary or vertical causality (i.e. that whereas in nature the cause of one created event is another created event, the cause of all the events which constitute the life of the Church is God). I would reply that to interpret the cosmos exclusively in terms of secondary causality is to fail to do justice to metaphysics, and that similarly to interpret the Church exclusively in terms of primary causality is to fail to do justice to Church history, a most unbiblical error. It may be true that to fail to do justice to metaphysics and Church history are the prevalent and characteristic errors of much that is influential in contemporary philosophy and theology. What I am arguing here is that the standpoint of secondary causality and that of primary causality must both be used whenever we are endeavouring to interpret any

order of creatures whatsoever. In order to see an order of creatures *as an order* we must interpret it from the point of view of its phenomenological integrity, and equally in order to interpret it as an order *of creatures* we must interpret it from the point of view of its ultimate dependence. The history and sociology of the visible Church is to its being what natural science is to the empirical reality of nature; the theological interpretation of the visible Church is to its being what metaphysics is to the order of nature. The paradoxical tendency of so many contemporary theologians is to combine a concept of nature which permits science and not metaphysics with a concept of the visible Church which encourages the theological interpretation but ignores its historical and sociological description. In the one case it sacrifices the ultimates to the proximates, while in the other case it reverses the procedure and sacrifices the proximates to the ultimates. This is the sorry intellectual result of trying to think out the relation of ultimates and proximates, of invisibilities and visibilities, without the sacramentalist conception which provides the only possible ground for their reconciliation.

Of course I am not arguing that the order of the Church Militant is a part of the order of nature. Clearly it is a supernatural order. It might be nearer to the truth to say that the order of the Church is a cultural order—and certainly all cultural orders are in some sense supernatural. (It is perhaps a mistake to talk about *the* supernatural; a great deal that enters into our ordinary daily life—e.g. banks and universities—is in the strict sense supernatural, because it takes more than what is properly called the order of nature to produce such things.) The point is that because they are both orders of creatures we may expect to find important and significant analogies between them. In both orders secondary causality is obvious and primary causality evident. In both cases we must say that the former participates in and is instrumental to the being and purposes of the latter. The ultimate dependence on the primary cause is the constitutive principle of the integrity of the whole realm of secondary causes, and this must be made as plain in the order of the Church, in any theological interpretation of the being of the Church, as it becomes more and more clear in the order of nature in any scientific account of that order. The rite of ordination, which is the sacrament of the divine initiative in the Church Militant, does not and cannot fulfil itself if we see it as a

plurality of diverse rites rather than as a unified historical system which visibly demonstrates the unity and continuing identity of the primary cause of which it is at once the instrument and symbol.

I am suggesting that the consecration of a bishop is the sacramental symbol of the unity and sovereignty of God, and the sacramental instrument through which that unity and sovereignty reveals and affirms as itself the constitutive principle of the integrity of the Church Militant. The symbolism alone might be compatible with different modes and concepts of ordination, but the instrumentality demands one basic principle of ordination—which is also the principle of the subordination of all things visible to the Will of God—which shall be visibly constitutive of the phenomenological integrity of the Church.

The drift of this argument is clear. The episcopal succession is essential to the *esse* of the Church Militant because it is essential to its visible unity and historic coherence. Whether or not God wills the episcopate it is certain that He wills the unity of His Church, which must mean that He wills whatever is essential to the maintenance of that unity so long as the Church persists in its incarnate condition as the Church Militant. To say that the unity which must always be one of the primary characteristics of the visible Church should nevertheless itself be invisible would be to commit a most extraordinary and unintelligible paradox. Organic, historical, socio-cultural unity is by nature visible. Paradox is often necessary and inescapable in theology, although always for intelligible reasons, but that does not mean that any paradox whatsoever is permissible. True paradox is necessitated by the depth of the subject matter of our thinking, not by the crudity of our thinking itself. The unity characteristic of the earthly, incarnate condition must necessarily be an appropriately visible unity.

But it is not enough to say that the episcopal structure is essential to the *esse* of the Church Militant. We must now go further and attempt to define precisely what this episcopate is. In brief the episcopate is human priesthood *par excellence*. It is human priesthood in its most valid and self-revealing form.

The Nature of Priesthood

The natural essence of priesthood reveals itself wherever and whenever one man stands on the Godward side of another. Life

is shot through with the possibility of such relationships. The parent stands on the Godward side of his children, the teacher on the Godward side of his pupils, the friend on the Godward side of his comrade, and so on. In this sense we may say that natural priesthood may be regarded as prophetic of the Christ and as fulfilled in and by Christ. He stands on the Godward side of all mankind. All priesthood is in its essential nature mediatorial, and Christ is the one mediator between God and man. He and He alone is *the Priest* in the absolute sense of the word. It is Christ not Christian priesthood who fulfils absolutely the ideal and prophetic promise of natural priesthood. Christian priesthood is not the flowering of natural priesthood, for between the shadow and the substance stands the reality of Christ. All Christian priesthood finds whatever reality it has by participation in His Priesthood, and is at once the ordained symbol and chosen instrument of His Priesthood. Because Christ is the true priest, and in the last analysis the only priest, the priesthood of the Church Militant is a priesthood which it possesses only as lost and found in Him, only in so far as it is incorporated into Him. Nevertheless in Him and under Him the whole Church has a priestly character, for in Christ's name the whole Church stands on the Godward side of the world, pointing to Him, the eternal Priest, as the ultimate reality and as the basic principle which gives validity to any priesthood which it may claim to possess.

That the whole Church, considered as mystically incorporated into the body of Him who is the one eternal Priest, has an indelibly priestly character is the great biblical truth which underlies what is known as the doctrine of ' the priesthood of the laity ', a most salutary conception which emphasises the immense responsibility of the laity and the true sanctity of the office and work of a layman in the Church of God. Unfortunately, as it has worked out in the history of Christendom, the doctrine of the priesthood of the laity has been interpreted and acted upon as though it were the precisely contrary doctrine of the laicity of the priesthood. It has turned the Christian priest in many parts of Christendom into the semi-lay ' minister of religion '. Too often the protestant minister of religion has thought of himself as though he were a kind of preaching layman, and has interpreted his life and position in the Church in terms of function rather than in terms of status. (This, as we have already seen, is contrary to the basic

direction of Christian thought whenever it has to do with human persons and affairs. Christian thought in such contexts is always a movement of the mind from function to status, from estimating human importance in terms of what men do to evaluating human dignity in terms of what men are. We are never thinking Christianly about men and human affairs unless this notion of status or indelible character is kept well to the fore.)

The essence of that status, conferred upon us in baptism, which we call being in the Church is not laicity but priesthood, and it is in terms of priesthood rather than laicity that the being of the Church, even of the Church Militant, must be interpreted. The Christ in whom the Christian lives and moves and has his being, the Christ into whose body the Christian is incorporated, is not Christ the eternal layman but Christ the eternal priest. The doctrine of the priesthood of the laity thus puts its question mark not against the concept of the priesthood but against the concept of the laity. Properly understood it is a revolution against any merely lay conception of Christianity, although it may also be a protest against a false sacerdotalism which is equally prone to turn its back on Holy Scripture and to interpret the great majority of the members of the Body of Christ as though they were indeed ' mere laymen '. The truth is that in the Body of Christ there are in the strict sense of the word no laity at all. The layman is not the logical contradiction of the ordained priest of the Church, rather he is gathered by his baptism into the first grade of the Church's priesthood.

So interpreted, the doctrine of the priesthood of the laity or, to use a better phrase, of the priesthood of the whole Body of Christ, is anything but the antithesis of the doctrine of the special priesthood of the ordained ministers of the Church. On the contrary it is only because the whole Church is priestly by nature that it is possible to call priests out of its ranks to function in the ordained ministry. We may say that just as there is a priesthood which characterises the whole Church, because the whole Church is the Body of Christ, and because the whole Church, in the name of Christ, stands on the Godward side of the world, so there is a special priesthood of the ordained minister of Christ, because in Christ's name and instrumentally to Christ's purposes the ordained minister stands on the Godward side of the Church. Neither the ordained priesthood of the Church, nor the priestly Church as a

whole, is a mediator in the absolute sense of the word. Christ alone is the one mediator between God and man. Nevertheless both the priest of the Church and the priestly Church are stamped with a mediatorial character, primarily because they are incorporated into the Body of the one Mediator, but also because they exist and function as the visible symbols in the world of the presence and activity of the One Mediator, and because they are instrumental in the world to the purposes of the One Mediator. Just as the priesthood of Christ absolutely fulfils the promise of all human priesthood, so it is true that Christian priesthood in the Church Militant is only properly so called in so far as it mystically participates in and outwardly represents and subserves His eternal Priesthood.

This means that our conception of the nature of Christian priesthood must be dominated and determined by our interpretation of the Person of Christ and our conception of His work. In the long sustained controversy between the catholic conception of Christian priesthood and protestant conceptions of the role and function of the Christian minister this fundamental dependence on christology has too often been obscured and forgotten. In the protestant conception the ministry is a kind of Christian rabbinate. The minister is primarily a teacher, setting forth the message and the meaning of the saving work of Christ in such a way as to elicit the response of faith and trust from those to whom he ministers. This faith and trust creates a profound and dramatic relationship between Christian people and Him whom they acknowledge to be their only Lord and Saviour. ' Justification by faith '—the meaning of this phrase we shall have to discuss later in this book—more or less adequately describes the nature and results of this all-important relationship. It is certainly not necessary from the standpoint of the catholic doctrine of the ministry to deny that all this is true enough so far as it goes. What must be said, however, is that it does not go nearly far enough. As we see it in the New Testament, above all in the Pauline Epistles, the aim and end-product of the whole process of redemption is not that men should be *related to* Christ, however warm and intimate and profound the tie that relates them, but rather that they should be incorporated *into* Christ, and being found *in* Christ should by Him be made one with the Father.

This condition of being mystically *in* Christ is one in which

mere relationship is transcended. It is no longer a question of attitude and approach on the one side and of deep and adequate response on the other, rather it is a matter of consummating and expressing a mystical and metaphysical fact. Hence a truly adequate christology both necessitates and justifies a sacerdotal, sacramental conception of priestly ministry in Christ's Church. The minister no longer has merely to communicate a message and elicit a response. His primary task from this point of view is to celebrate a liturgy. The Redemption as we see it in the New Testament is essentially a liturgy, a solemn action before God performed by the Incarnate Lord, in the course of which Christ incorporates men into Himself, that they may share and inherit His unity with the Father. It is above all when He is recognised and acclaimed as Redeemer that Christ is seen to be the Lord of the liturgy.

The fathers of the early Christian Church did not hesitate to refer to this mystery by the Greek name of ' divinization '. Not, of course, that men through Christ become gods or divine; but rather and certainly that in Christ and through Christ and by Christ they are indeed caught up into the life of the Godhead, transfigured and in His image ' transformed from glory into glory '.[1] According, for example, to St. Athanasius the Son of God has indeed divinised the humanity in which He was Incarnate. Through the sacramental action of His Church our humanity is incorporated into that sacred humanity and will ultimately share its status at the right hand of God. Some modern critics of the early Church fathers have supposed that they took over this idea from the Greek mystery religions. Certainly they borrowed the term ' divinization ', perhaps not altogether happily, from precisely that source. But what they had in mind when they used this word was that New Testament reality, subsequently verified in Christian experience, which Dr. Schweitzer has much more recently termed ' the Christ-mysticism of St. Paul '.

Once we appreciate the full christology of the Catholic Church in all its depth and richness it becomes obvious that the Christian ministry is necessarily a priestly ministry. Its primary function is to unite men with Christ in the Christian mysteries or liturgies and present men as lost and found in Christ in the pleading of Christ's sacrifice before the Father's throne. It is essentially a

[1] 2 Cor. 3 : 18

liturgical and sacrificial ministry. I repeat that the protestant conception of ministry is valid as far as it goes, and to be so ' catholic ' as to neglect it altogether is to be too ' catholic ' for Christ's Church. But to go no further is to turn one's back on the deepest things in Holy Scripture and Christian experience.

It is perhaps not altogether surprising that where protestant conceptions of the Christian ministry and the Christian life prevail there is a persistent tendency to retreat from the fulness of the Church's christology and to misinterpret and undervalue the meaning of the true and complete humanity of Christ on which Catholic theology lays so heavy a stress. The humanity of Christ does not merely mean that He is one of us, a kind of exemplary humanity which we can imitate. On the contrary the humanity of Christ means not so much that He is one of us as that we can become a part of Him, and being lost and found in Him can share His unity with the Father. Christ's humanity is not merely one more example of humanity, which makes Him a part of the human race, rather it is a universal humanity which all men can enter, so that He is not so much a part of the human race as the whole of the human race. It is in this way that the theology of the Catholic Church grasps, appropriates, interprets and expresses the very depth of the gospel and the Christian life. Thus the task of Christian ministry is to consummate in every place and time that primal liturgy, that ground and source of all Christian liturgy, which we call the Redemption.

The fullness of this Christian priesthood is contained in the episcopate. We Anglicans are bound by the all-important declaration of our Church, in the preface to the ordinal, that ' it is evident unto all men, diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons '. The preface goes on to declare that it is the intent of what was then the Church of England but has now become the Anglican Communion that ' these orders may be continued, and reverently used and esteemed in this Church . . .'. We must admit, however, that in Holy Scripture itself the order of priest is not emphasised in the way that the orders of bishop and deacon are clearly set before us. True, we glimpse in the New Testament those elders of the Church from whom the members of the later order of priests were to be drawn, and possibly had in some places

already begun to be drawn in New Testament times, but it is probably true that in this earliest period there is a genuine confusion of the role of priest and bishop not because, as the orthodox Presbyterian would hold, all priests are really bishops, but because the bishops are the only Christian priests in the strictest sense of the word. Thus it would appear probable from the somewhat scanty and confused evidences which the earliest Church has left behind that for some time the bishop continued to be the proper minister of the eucharist. Apparently even when the Christian community grew so large that it had to gather in different buildings scattered through one city it long continued to be the custom for the bishop alone to celebrate the eucharist in one particular building, and for the deacons to take the sacramental gifts from the bishop's eucharist to the other buildings and there communicate the faithful.

Probably it was with the extension of the Church into rural areas, making any arrangement of this kind quite impracticable, that the true parish priest as we now know him began to emerge as a distinct order in the Church. To him the bishop delegated many of his characteristic functions and it was his task to perform the bishop's office towards the parishioners entrusted to his care by the bishop. From this point of view we can see that even now the bishop is the true parish priest of every parish in his diocese, the parish priest himself being in the last analysis the bishop's ordained deputy. Thus the office of priest emerges in Christian history only gradually and subsequently to the primary New Testament offices of bishop (or apostle) and deacon. The office of bishop is thus the really essential element which lies at the very heart of ministerial structure. It is the episcopal office, even more than the threefold ministry, which stands revealed as the basic and integrating characteristic of the Church Militant. The rest of the catholic ministry functions in dependence upon him, just as he exists and functions in utter dependence upon the absolute priesthood of Christ. Christ through the bishop is always the Lord of the Church, and in receiving their ministry from the bishop the priests and deacons of the Church receive their ministry, even as the bishop himself receives it, directly from the Christ whose absolute priesthood and ministry their relative ministry and priesthood represents.

This theological truth is expressed in the old Latin formula used

at the institution of a priest as the pastor of a parish when the bishop says to him '*accipe curam meam et tuam*'—'receive this cure of souls which is mine and thine'. This formula is still retained in the Church of England, and it might well be revived in those parts of the Anglican communion which have allowed it to fall into disuse.

Some contemporary objections to this doctrine

This radically episcopal doctrine may seem open to three important objections which must now be considered in turn.

(*a*) Some people hold that the insistence on episcopal succession is, as they usually put it, 'mechanical'. Now it is certainly true that we do find mechanical processes going on in the life of the world to which God has called us and in which God has placed us. Since mechanical processes are realities there could be nothing particularly repugnant or disgraceful in saying that at times such processes may, and indeed must, be transformed by the act of God in the Church into the sacramental expressions and embodiments of His reality and the sacramental instruments of His purpose. To the true sacramentalist, that is to the man who has thoroughly understood Christian doctrine of creation, no reality whatsoever is repugnant to the being or purpose of God or sacramentally useless. God must be the Lord of all that is mechanical in creation just as much as he is the Lord of all that is vital, mental or spiritual. We cannot serve God only with our spirituality, because so much that is an essential part of our being is by nature non-spiritual. Or rather our true spirituality is the way in which, and the extent to which, our whole being is drawn into God and into line with the purposes of God. In this latter sense even a reality which we might too easily suppose to be by nature non-spiritual, like a machine, can nevertheless receive or partake in, and manifest, a genuine spirituality whenever it is used in subordination to the purposes of our Lord the Spirit. If we consider the essential nature of things rather than their actual performance in a fallen world, then we shall see that all things whatsoever are characterised by a spirituality of some kind. That is, they live and move and have their being in God and are instrumental to the purposes of God. Even if the catholic doctrine of episcopal succession were to be pronounced mechanical, it would not thereby be shown to be entirely

repugnant to the Nature and Will of God, who both loves and wills mechanism.

But very obviously the essential matter or raw material employed for sacramental purposes in the sacrament of episcopal succession is not mechanical. In fact it is only called mechanical by the use of a not particularly valid, indeed rather misleading, analogy. The raw material or matter of this particular sacrament is drawn not from the realm of mechanism but from the area of life inhabited by those realities which make possible the continuity and cumulative development of human communities and cultures. Perhaps the best word for this area of reality is ' tradition ', provided that by the word ' tradition ' we mean something living and growing and handing itself on, rather than something historically outmoded and dead which is rather pointlessly and uselessly handed on by sterile, unimaginative men. The former meaning is the one we should always have in mind whenever we use the word tradition. To use it in the latter sense is to perpetuate a deplorable semantic error. The essential matter of the sacrament of episcopal succession is thus not mechanism but living and growing and continuing society. To describe the processes which constitute living, growing and continuing society as mechanical would imply a purely mechanistic sociology. But I cannot really believe that all those who set aside the notion of episcopal succession as mechanical would really wish, when discussing other matters which arouse fewer of their prejudices, to advocate or defend a purely mechanistic sociology. Social processes are not mechanisms and ought never to be called mechanisms. They ought not even to be called ' social mechanisms ', although that phrase at least has the advantage of bringing out the faulty, pseudo-analogical basis of the whole idea. Nor do we improve matters very much if we insist on talking about ' social organisms '. Society is no more an organism than it is a machine, its essence can no more be grasped by biology than by physics. Society is a mental and cultural system in which men go on doing what they do, and in doing so go on being what they are, from generation to generation, because they know what they mean and intend when they do what they do. Social processes can be understood by reason and consciously willed. There is no helpful analogy here with either mechanism or organism. Society and culture are *sui generis*, and it is from this area of life and reality that the indispen-

sable ' matter ' of the sacrament of episcopal succession is selected. Episcopal succession is among other things the sacrament of social order, and social order is no more repugnant to the Will of God or incapable of embodying and symbolising His reality than water, bread and wine.

(*b*) Now we turn to an objection which appeals particularly strongly to enthusiastic supporters of the contemporary ecumenical movement, to those who are deeply and rightly concerned to establish conditions which will make possible the reunion of Christendom at no distant date. It is often urged by such people that to insist, as we have done, on the historic episcopate as the structural characteristic essential to and constitutive of the very being of the Church Militant is in effect to ' unchurch ' those large Christian bodies which most unhappily no longer possess it, and in many cases no longer even desire it. To this it may be replied in the first place that if indeed the argument from Scripture and tradition, and the appeal to the Will of God made manifest in history, genuinely points in this direction *then in this direction we must go.* We must indeed speak the truth in love, but most emphatically we must speak the truth. Christian love neither negates nor prohibits frankness. To love at the expense of honesty is not to love at all. No doubt love is an even more important virtue than honesty, but love which can only survive and express itself by suppressing honest freedom of speech is a travesty of real love.

But I am not at all sure that the argument does in fact point in this direction. The contention of this chapter has been that the episcopate is one structural characteristic essential to the very being of the Church Militant. It certainly follows from this point of view that any Christian body which has lost or rejected the episcopate will suffer from certain manifest debilitations and corruptions. The mere fact that we episcopal Christians suffer from obvious debilitations and corruptions of our own should not prevent us from pointing out in love how very manifest these debilitations and corruptions are. Nevertheless it is no part of our argument that the historic episcopate is the *only* characteristic of the Church Militant requisite and necessary to the validity of its life. On the contrary, side by side with this one structural characteristic, I would suggest two institutional characteristics which are equally essential to the very being of the Church—

scripture and liturgy. Now it may very well be that those Christian bodies which have most regrettably lost the historic episcopate may still retain and make a faithful use of these two essential institutional characteristics. Indeed just as a blind man may develop an unusually acute sense of hearing, as a kind of compensation for his organic deprivation, so these bodies, precisely because they have lost the historic episcopate, may use either or both of these two institutions in such a way as to put many episcopal Christians to shame. Of course, the compensation can never be total. The life of the non-episcopalian churches is inevitably characterised by a corrosive element of invalidity from which there is no escape apart from a renewed, humble and penitent acceptance of the historic episcopate.

These issues arose as early as the third century in the so-called 'baptismal controversy' between Pope Stephen of Rome and St. Cyprian of Carthage. The former insisted, against the latter, on the validity of the baptism with water and the threefold sacred name administered in the schismatic churches. In his view those who had received such baptism were not to be rebaptised but needed only the laying on of hands for the receiving of the Holy Spirit. This later became the accepted view of the whole Catholic Church. Pope Stephen did not mean, of course, that these schismatic bodies were in themselves valid, but he did nevertheless imply that since they were bodies of believing Christians their irregular common life together was shot through with what we may call random elements of validity, which would be fully confirmed and more deeply grounded in a wider truth whenever they turned to their true mother, the Catholic Church. It is no part of our purpose in urging the necessity of the episcopate to tell those Christians who lack this treasure that, lacking it, they have in effect nothing at all. Rather we must gladly acknowledge that they possess many priceless things already, and that in the continuing historic Church they will find all these familiar treasures existing in indissoluble union with other precious gifts and values which they now lack.

Thus, to say that much in their church life is invalid neither presupposes nor implies any denial that they may be in the fullest sense of the word Christian people, in touch with and saved by the redemptive activity of Christ, and enjoying the full outpouring of the grace of God through those channels of Divine Grace to which

they cling so rightly and so obstinately. Non-episcopal Christians are Christians and our fellow Christians at that. Nor are they to be blamed in any personal sense for the defective church life which they have inherited from past history and to which they are not unnaturally loyal. Partly at least this is due to the backslidings and spiritual failings both in the past and in the present of the catholics. We have retained something absolutely essential to the validity of the Church's life. But how loyal have we been to the essence of it? How lamentably have we failed to live up to the glory of it? Therefore we stand in danger of the greater condemnation. There is no doubt a judgment of God upon those Christians who evade or neglect something which he has willed and ordained in history and which is essential to the fulfilment of His purpose. But an even weightier judgment of God may fall upon those who have retained these things and yet proved themselves unworthy of their great privileges. The claims that we make and must make for the historic episcopate do not in theory, and must not be allowed in practice to, minister to our complacency; rather they should intensify our penitence.

It is very plain that many groups of non-episcopal Christians have clung to and treasured Holy Scripture in a most exemplary way that provides an example to us all. Certainly many of them have thriven spiritually on the biblical ingredients which have provided their basic, sometimes their only, devotional diet. It must be admitted that their use and interpretation of Holy Scripture is often gravely compromised by the necessity in so many protestant churches of so using and interpreting it as to justify their own denominational tradition. For example, to many protestant theologians the kind of scriptural argument contained in the first chapter of this book, which must seem almost obvious to a catholic, would seem almost unthinkable. Inevitably they have an ideological axe to grind. (I use the term 'ideological' in the strictly Marxist sense, as referring to the way in which the thought characteristic of a group may be unconsciously twisted and shaped by the necessity of defending the group's existence and asserting its characteristic interests and purposes.) Protestant biblical commentary on some of the more obvious sacramentalist motifs in Holy Scripture is frequently deflected and perverted in the same way. Nevertheless these characteristic perversions of protestant biblical commentary do not in any way

affect the high estimate which we must make of the protestants' devotion to Holy Scripture considered as a whole. Their love of Scripture is indeed manifest, and an exemplary spectacle for the whole of Christendom.

It might be argued, however, that vast numbers of contemporary protestants have neglected the other institutional characteristic, liturgy, even more gravely and wantonly than they have set aside the essential structural characteristic of the historic episcopate. But this judgment would seem to me to arise out of an elementary mistake about the nature of liturgy.

When the Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops made its famous appeal to all Christian people in 1920 it proposed four elements as the indispensable basis of any reunited Christendom—the historic episcopate, Scripture, the creeds and the two sacraments of the gospel. In pleading instead for the triad—the one structural characteristic, the historic episcopate, and the two institutional characteristics, Scripture and the liturgy—I am not really departing from the basic principles of the Lambeth Quadrilateral. I am merely, as it seems to me more accurately, putting the creeds and the sacraments together under the one heading, liturgy. The basic patterns of action contained in the eucharistic liturgies repeat and perpetuate those basic patterns of divine action in Christ encompassing our redemption and sanctification, which we find set forth in Holy Scripture and which we reassert in summary liturgical terms in the creeds. The creeds are indeed part of the baptismal and eucharistic liturgies and that is where they properly belong.

Liturgy is primarily a pattern of action and only secondarily a pattern of words which interprets and makes plain the meaning of the pattern of action. It is certainly true that wherever in Christendom liturgy is most healthy and conscious of its nature it always tends to round out and complete the liturgical pattern of action with an interpretative pattern of words. This pattern of words has many great advantages—e.g. the secondary advantage of great literary beauty and seemliness which characterises almost all historic liturgies, and the singular excellence of delivering the congregation during its highest moments of worship from the tyranny and limitations of any particular minister's personality. But these are not the written liturgy's primary purpose. Its primary purpose is to make plain the Church's answer to the

question, ' What mean ye by this service? ' even while the liturgical action is taking place.

But whatever the words, the heart of the liturgy is in the pattern of action itself. Even where baptism and the eucharist are celebrated and performed in the most uncompromisingly ' free church ' way the basic elements of liturgy survive. He ' took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it, and gave it to his disciples.' [1] In this one brief scriptural citation the four basic elements of the eucharistic action are made plain—(1) offertory, (2) consecration, (3) fraction, (4) communion; and we may truly say that whether the eucharistic action is performed at St. Peter's, Rome, or in some pentecostal conventicle these four events invariably occur. Liturgy may indeed be very sick in the pentecostal conventicle, but we cannot say that it is totally absent once we have grasped the essential character of liturgy. Indeed it is impossible to make eucharist at all without performing these four actions, even if sometimes in not quite the right order, and certainly these four actions are essential and primary constituents of the life of the Church Militant. However meagre the pattern of words through which these actions are interpreted and interpret themselves while they are taking place, however inadequate the theology in terms of which their meaning is expounded, their liturgical character yet survives in almost every part of Christendom.

It may be said that these actions are ' invalidly ' performed in those parts of Christendom which lack the episcopally ordained ministry, and in a sense this is true. But this does not mean that they are not mediums available to and used by the Lord Christ in the carrying out of His redemptive and gracious work. The historic episcopate as we have conceived and defended it here is essential to the validity of the Church as a whole rather than to the validity of any particular liturgical action engaged in by a number of sincere Christian people. Where a Church life is partially invalid no doubt its liturgical and sacramental actions are partially invalidated also. But to be invalidated is not the same thing as to be voided altogether. For myself I have always refused to participate in intercommunion or ' open communion services ' celebrated by a minister who has not had episcopal ordination, and I believe that I have been right so to do, but I cannot say, because

[1] cf. 1 Cor. 11 : 24 as quoted in the Book of Common Prayer.

it seems obvious to me that I ought not to be there, that therefore Christ ought not to be there either. Clearly knowing what I do and believing what I do I am utterly bound to His Church as He has revealed it to me, but He is not bound to it in the same exclusive way. I must acknowledge myself to be fettered in conscience, but I dare not claim that my conscience fetters Him. To do so would be to repeat the mistake of those of the Chosen People of the Old Testament who supposed that because they were God's Chosen People other peoples could not be God's people in any sense at all. Men in the course of our sad history may well blind themselves to and cut themselves off from an essential part of the purpose of God revealed in Christ, but they are not thereby separated or estranged from the all-embracing circle of His redeeming love. I conclude that in some sense or other to 'unchurch' our fellow Christians, with great sorrow and great love, is in no sense to de-Christianise them, or to deny that they remain our brother Christians in every conceivable sense of the word. This consideration as it seems to me is the essential driving force which should compel us to participate with wholehearted enthusiasm in the ecumenical movement. The truly terrible thing in the present situation is not that we are separated, for reasons so deeply grounded in our beliefs about the pattern of divine action in history that we can do no other, from our fellow men, but rather that these things cut us off even from our fellow Christians. So long as there are any non-Christians in the world we must remain cut off by our deepest convictions from some of our fellow men, but that Christians should be separated from each other is a tragedy and a scandal indeed.

(*c*) The third objection is a more obviously factual and historical one. The historic episcopate, it may be said, has not been able to preserve the unity of even those Christians who possess and prize it. It is undeniable indeed that the episcopal churches are themselves divided. Thus history confronts us with the great division between East and West dating from the eleventh century, and the later division within the West between the Anglican Communion and the Roman Church dating from the Reformation. The root cause of both of these tragic conditions is the subversion of the historic episcopate by a vast church system which has retained it beneath the heavy weight of the quite different and indeed sometimes alien institution of the papacy. Rome retains the historic

episcopate, yet for Roman Catholics it is the papacy rather than the historic episcopate which functions as the basic constitutive principle of the Church's integrity.[1] Against this extraordinary deviation the non-Roman episcopal Christians of both the East and the West continue to protest. Papalism retains the historic episcopate, and at the same time, by relegating it to second place, denies its essentially primary function. Thus the doctrine which we have set forward in this chapter is just as much denied in practice by Rome as by the great bulk of Reformation Protestants, for this doctrine demands not merely that the historic episcopate should be retained in the life of the Church but also that it should be given its proper primacy in the life of the Church, and not be overshadowed by another institution of undoubted usefulness which lacks the same theological validity.

Yet it is interesting to notice that the Anglican finds himself divided from Rome on this question by considerations very different from those which divide him from most of the Protestant bodies deriving from the Reformation and subsequent post-Reformation schisms. When the Anglican discusses the matter with a Roman Catholic both are agreed on the necessity of episcopal succession, but disagreed about the question whether in fact the Anglican communion possesses it. In discussion with his Protestant friends the Anglican finds that they are not disposed to question the fact that the Anglican communion has retained the episcopal succession, rather they insist on denying its necessity and importance. He finds himself divided from the Romans, in other words, about a question of historical fact, and divided from the Protestants about the basic theological question of the proper definition of the Church Militant. The two controversies are very different from each other and it is obvious that the theological issues at stake in the second controversy are of a much more profound nature than the historical issues at stake in the first controversy.

Certainly it is true that modern Roman controversialists have for the most part abandoned attempts, as with the so-called 'nag's

[1] In many contemporary Roman Catholic writings the chief argument for the Episcopate (i.e. that it is essential to the unity and continuity of the Church) is drastically re-edited and transformed into an argument for the papacy. There can be no clearer example of the way in which the papacy in Roman Catholic theology usurps the place and *raison d'être* of the episcopate in the Church.

head fable ' to prove that there has been any actual break in the Anglican episcopal succession itself. Rather they have relied upon a more theological sounding argument to the effect that the Anglican Church, in continuing the episcopal succession, failed to do so with the ' intention ' which has always dominated and animated the Church from the very beginning in its ordination of priests and deacons and its consecration of bishops. A brief reference to the preface of the Anglican Ordinal should be sufficient to dispose of this very tenuous and dubious speculation. ' It is evident unto all men diligently reading Holy Scripture and ancient authors, that from the Apostles' time there have been these Orders of Ministers in Christ's Church—Bishops, Priests and Deacons . . . and therefore, to the *intent* that these orders may be continued, etc., etc.' The preface to the Ordinal actually uses the word ' intent ' and clearly states what the intention of the Anglican Church in promulgating the Ordinal was from the very first, viz. that these orders of bishop, priest and deacon, which have existed in Christ's Church from the Apostles' time, may be continued. The clear intention of our Church is and always was to continue that episcopal ministry which in its view has been received and ' had in such reverent estimation ' not merely prior to the Reformation but from the time of the apostles. One can only conclude that the intention of the Anglican Church in consecration and ordination is here quite explicitly asserted to be identical with the intention of the whole Church in performing such actions from the time of the apostles. There is no kind of speculation here. The meaning of the words is utterly plain. Is there in all Christendom to be found any abiding controversy so entirely superfluous as this one? Our Roman friends have betrayed themselves into maintaining a debating point so false and shallow that even the most eminent and intellectually agile can hardly carry out the motions of it without seeming ridiculous and, much as one hates to say it, intellectually dishonest. The very fatuousness of the argument indicates the desperate straits to which the Roman Church is reduced in order to maintain a position which is plainly ideological in the strictly Marxist sense of the word.

Of course the historic episcopate cannot guarantee unity. For unity is never possible without love. What the historic episcopate can and does do is to maintain the structural conditions which make visible unity possible. Even so the absence of love and the

presence of sin—and, of course, wherever love is absent sin is bound to be present—can work their usual havoc and make impossible that which is all the time structurally possible. We know of no way on earth of absolutely guaranteeing the maintenance of unity against the absence of love and the presence of sin—the absence of love *in us*, of course, and the presence of sin *in us* as well as their absence and presence in other people. But it must equally be said that even the presence of love and the absence of sin could not of themselves provide visible unity if the structural conditions of that visible unity were lacking. It still remains true that the historic episcopate, and the historic episcopate alone, provides the essential structural condition, even though it may unhappily be also the case that we find disunity, owing to the absence of love and the presence of sin, even where the structural conditions of unity prevail. I conclude from this that the fact of division and disunity between episcopal churches does not of itself disprove the claim that the historic episcopate is the one structural characteristic essential to the integrity of the Church Militant here on earth.

The Episcopate and the Episcopal Office

This chapter may well conclude with a word of warning to those Anglicans who may find in it that dangerously pleasant kind of reading which by confirming our prejudices and opinions ministers fatally to our complacency. We Anglicans, by the Grace of God, have retained the episcopal office and estate, which is indeed the most important thing, but are we so sure that we have equally succeeded in retaining the true episcopal function?

The function of the bishop in the Church imposes a three-fold task. In the first place his office is a liturgical one. The bishop has his being at the very heart of the liturgical life of the Church. He consecrates, ordains, confirms, and his priests minister the sacraments in his name and on his behalf to the people. The whole diocese, considered as a limb of the Body of Christ existing primarily *coram deo*, revolves around him. ' Where the bishop is, there is the Church ', not because the bishop unites the Church with Christ but because Christ gathers and concentrates the Church around his bishop. Secondly he is a theological officer, concerned above all with the transmission from generation to generation of that scriptural ' apostolic tradition ' and ' rule of

faith ' which lies at the heart of, and always exercises sovereignty over, the subsequent traditions of the Church. The bishop is the guardian of the purity and integrity of the gospel. Thirdly, he is a pastor, related above all to the clergy who minister on his behalf as they in turn are related to the people of their parishes. The bishop is the shepherd of the shepherds, as the shepherds in their turn are the shepherds of his sheep. We may well ask ourselves how far all this is true of the contemporary episcopate in the Anglican Church. How much of their working time is in fact devoted to their proper episcopal functions, and how much to administrative and financial activities which, however important, are in fact and most manifestly not episcopal functions?

It would seem obvious that a bishop who dedicates himself entirely to his episcopal office will not have very much time for attention to other matters. Yet in most parts of the Anglican Communion it is probably true to say that our bishops, not through any fault of their own, are immensely preoccupied with tasks which are not strictly episcopal at all, and which ought, in the interests of the healthy functioning of the episcopate, to be delegated to subordinates. Liturgy, theology and the pastoral care of their clergy must always be their essential and principal tasks. Administration and the care of the diocesan finances are not the proper or central concern of a man who is called to the office and work of a bishop in the Church of God. Thus there would seem to be a sense in which we Anglicans, who possess, love and treasure the episcopate, nevertheless still need to recover the episcopal office.

It is at least possible that Christians separated from us who distrust and fear the episcopate would be led to reverence and desire it if only we could show it to them as it really is. Certainly what some sincere non-episcopal Christians dread is not so much episcopacy as prelacy. Their minds are filled with stored up memories of the prince-bishops of the middle ages, who were barons rather than bishops, of the eighteenth-century bishops, who were political figures and voting members of the English House of Lords rather than servants of the servants of God, of the English scholar bishops of the nineteenth century, for the most part attractive but somewhat withdrawn and irrelevant figures, and of the Anglican business-man bishops of the twentieth century, busied and troubled about so many things but often perforce

growing somewhat careless of the three things which are indispensably necessary. In the Roman Church the episcopate is so much overshadowed by the modern development of the papacy that there also its true character is obscured. Oddly enough the recent writings of Bishop Leslie Newbiggin suggest that the newly united Church of South India may be able to point us towards a genuine rediscovery of the fulness of the episcopal office.[1]

On the other hand in contemporary ecumenical discussion we frequently encounter a somewhat disconcerting fact. Again and again in such negotiations episcopacy is interpreted as though it were merely a method of church government, and we find that the representatives of the non-episcopal churches are surprisingly willing to consider it seriously, provided it is defined exclusively in this non-theological, non-biblical way. Apparently it seems to many of them to differ very little, when reduced to these minimal proportions, from some of the forms of administration which they possess already. Yet this willingness is strangely out of character. As I have said, the non-episcopal objection to the episcopate is most easily understood and sympathised with when it is seen as a revolt against prelacy (i.e. the episcopate degenerated into a method of government), and the traditional Reformationist approach would seem more in harmony with an authentic episcopate understood in exclusively biblical and theological terms. Have we perhaps here one more example of the way in which Reformationism has become less concerned with maintaining the fundamental validities of the Reformation protest and more and more preoccupied with the mere survival of the more questionable Reformation institutions?

We have rejected in this book any distinction between the episcopate considered as the *esse* of the Church on the one hand and as part of the *bene* or *plene esse* on the other. From the point of view of the analysis in this chapter it would seem obvious that the episcopate is always and everywhere of the *esse* of the Church Militant. Whether it is also part of the *bene* or *plene esse* of the Church Militant at any particular place or at any particular time is another matter. Quite often it would appear to be nothing of the kind. But of this we may be very sure: if our episcopate were

[1] cf. *The Household of God* by Leslie Newbiggin (New York Friendship Press, 1954). cf. also, *Empty Shoes*. A Study of the Church of South India (Nat. Council, 1956) pp. 82 ff.

able to devote itself more wholeheartedly and completely to fulfilling the essentials of the episcopal office, if it were more visibly and obviously a part of the *plene* and *bene esse* as well as of the *esse* of the Church Militant, then many of those who are at present somewhat sceptical of its necessity would gradually be led to desire it, and even to possess themselves of it, for the sake of its own inherent values and advantages.

3

THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH MILITANT

We have already noticed in the previous discussions that the Christian analysis of any reality must always be in terms of being rather than in terms of function. The philosopher who prefers to analyse realities in terms of their function and aptitude for action possesses a type of mind that is inwardly orientated towards domination and exploitation. However loudly the pragmatists and instrumentalists may proclaim their democratic faith the real bias of their thought is in the other direction. We respect beings but we *use* functions. The itch for action is the hall-mark of the barbarian. True civilisation, which is a kind of creative rationalism, is always more interested in being than in functioning, more concerned with the contemplation of being than with mere activity for its own sake.

In a sense function is always peripheral to being. The category of being always interprets realities in terms of *what* they are, but the functions of real things are determined not only by *what* they are but also by *where* they are. This means that when we come to discuss the functions of the Church Militant we have to consider not only the Church's eternal nature but also the demands pressed upon that eternal nature by its earthly situation. The functions of the Church Militant are determined as much by the world's condition as by the Church's nature.

The Church's basic sacramental function we have discussed already. It is the characteristic task of the Church Militant to make its visibilities and temporalities the symbols of its eternal invisibilities and the instruments of eternal purposes whose fulfilment is not yet visible to us. Of this we shall say no more. Here we shall be concerned with the mutual relationship of four functions which obviously have an equal necessity and a certain completeness in any discussion of this kind—worship, evangelism, the pastoral ministry, the prophetic ministry.

Worship

For some writers there is a kind of tension between worship and evangelism and they will even work up a rather spurious controversy, couched in terms of something like a dialectical antithesis, about the relative importance of these two necessities. It is even supposed that the primary stress on worship is characteristic of catholic Christianity whereas the consensus of protestant thought tends to lay the primary stress on evangelism. There would certainly appear to be something to be said for the idea that catholics stress worship more strongly than their protestant brethren, but there is obviously very little to be said for the view that on this account they lay less stress on evangelism. The distinction between worship and evangelism is an obvious and valid distinction, but it is an absolutely illicit antithesis. To enquire as to the relative importance of worship and evangelism is like asking the question, ' Which is the more important, eating or drinking? ' It is only possible to reply to such an absurd enquiry by saying that any man will sicken and die if he totally neglects either.

Nevertheless there is one sense in which worship may be awarded priority. So long as the Church finds itself in a world of largely unbelieving or half-believing people, she must of course seek to evangelise it. The Chosen People, as we saw at the very beginning of our discussion, has been chosen in order that God's first choice of the whole human race in Adam may be visibly re-established. The Chosen People, in other words, is essentially a missionary people. In the presence of men in the world, *coram hominibus*, the Church evangelises, but in the presence of God, *coram Deo*, the Church worships. Now it is true to say that the Church only exists *coram hominibus*, in the presence of unbelieving, half-believing men, in that phase or dimension of her being which we call the Church Militant, whereas the Church exists *coram Deo* eternally and in every phase or dimension of her being. We may say that whereas the necessity of evangelism is rooted in the special situation of the Church Militant in a fallen world, the necessity of worship is rooted in the eternal being of the whole Church. In the Kingdom of God every function of the Church except that of worship will have been taken from her. For the Kingdom of God is the triumph of absolute love, and of

that intercourse of God and man in worship which is love's most perfect work.

This is perhaps the central theme of the great imaginative and poetical descriptions of the worship offered by the saints in heaven which we find in the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation. Here the author's purpose is to encourage his fellow Christians to withstand the shock and challenge of persecution. 'Be thou faithful unto death', he cries, 'and I will give you the crown of life.'[1] In order to encourage and sustain the capacity for martyrdom he attempts to describe the life of the saints in heaven. Not having been to heaven he has to carry out this task in visionary terms, using symbols and images drawn from earthly experience. It is significant that he chooses to do so in terms of symbols and images drawn from the experience of worship. Relying perhaps on his memory of the worship offered in the Temple at Jerusalem, and drawing perhaps also on his experience of worship in the early Christian Church, he gives us a magnificent poetic account of the adoration of the reality of God, and of the Lamb of God, Christ, raised up on His Throne, with the saints of God clad in their vestments and holding their golden bowls full of incense, prostrating themselves and resting neither day nor night from the ceaseless adoration of the Divine Majesty. To the worshipper it is a fascinating and enthralling picture. All the necessities which now distract and call us away from the essential task of men have been abolished, and nothing remains but to love God and be beloved by God.

It must be confessed that this picture of the eternal worship offered by the saints is what in modern language might be called a rather 'high church' affair. (It reads like a kind of everlasting High Mass, of a ceremonial beauty and elaboration beyond the wildest dreams of even the 'spikiest' high church server.) It would probably be an exaggeration to suppose that the early Church, particularly in the days of persecution, was at that time in any position to offer worship of this kind, but certainly the idea of this kind of worship was not repugnant to the mind of the writer or, as we may very well suppose, to the minds of his readers. Indeed neither in the Jewish Church nor in the early Christian Church do we find that horror of what they call 'catholic' worship which has been characteristic of so many protestants since the

[1] Rev. 2 : 10

Reformation. It was at one time believed that the Hebrew prophets had been antagonistic to the priestly worship of the Temple, but according to more modern scholarship this supposition would appear to have been a mistake. The prophets demanded sincerity in worship, but any really good priest would have done the same. Certainly the prophets did not call for the outright abolition of the Hebrew sacrificial system. The finding of a summary of the teachings of the earlier prophets, not unlike our Book of Deuteronomy and at all events containing the germ of its basic point of view, in the Temple at Jerusalem, during the reign of the King Josiah, even suggests the existence of some kind of alliance between the Jerusalem priests and the prophetic movement. It was the corruptions and idolatories of the priests in the local village sanctuaries which were resolutely opposed by both the prophets and the Jerusalem clergy, and their solution of the problem was to confine the priestly and sacrificial worship to the Temple at Jerusalem, where it might more easily be maintained in its purity. Modern anti-sacerdotalism and anti-ceremonialism was still many centuries away, and we pervert history if we think we can discover any biblical precedent for it.

Biblical worship is both liturgical and ceremonial, both inward and outward at the same time, with the outwardness the symbol and instrument of the inwardness, because it is essentially the worship of the whole man. The ideal of a purely spiritual, non-liturgical and non-ceremonial worship for purely spiritual beings is entirely false to the whole biblical conception of man. In the Bible man is not an essential inwardness or spirituality somewhat unhappily and embarrassingly housed in a physical outwardness, called his body, which is irrelevant to and misrepresentative of his true nature. From the biblical point of view man is above all a unity, and we may say in more modern language that he can only affirm and maintain himself as a unity, and worship God with the whole of his being, by constantly making his outwardness the sacrament of his inwardness. I say this in order to emphasise that the kind of Christian worship which we usually call ' catholic ' is not only faithful to biblical precedent but also responsive to and reflective of the basic biblical conceptions. Catholic worship is biblical worship.

And for that very reason it is also human worship, suffused by a warm affirmative humanism which is concerned that man should

worship God with the whole of his complex being in its integrity, repudiating any divisive or quasi-schizophrenic spirituality. I well remember realising this very vividly about the time when years ago I was beginning to turn towards Christianity, and to realise that if indeed I must be a Christian then from that it necessarily followed that I must join myself to some part of the Christian Church. For a time I sampled the worship or public gathering together of various churches and denominations, sometimes in utter despair, but the moment I found myself in an act of Catholic worship, even though as yet I understood very little of what was supposed to be going on, I experienced at once a wild, excited leap of the heart. This I knew was *it*. After this nothing else could satisfy me, and now I knew why by comparison with this everything else seemed pallid and ineffective. This was a way of worship for the whole man in his integrity. Of course there were the obvious dangers of mere formalism—they could be perceived at a first glance—but the glory of it made it worth the risk. That of course was many years ago, and since then I have matured somewhat, grown certainly in years and, as I hope, in understanding also, perhaps even in grace (though of that we sinners can never be too certain in a fallen world), but I still feel that lift of the heart and I am still certain that if I have been wrong all these years about everything else, in this at least, by the grace and favour of God, it has been given me to be right. Perhaps that is why I love the Book of Revelation.

The doctrine of heaven as it appears in the last book of the Bible would seem to give us three fundamental conceptions or categories in terms of which it may be analysed and expounded. The first of these is the category of mystical vision. This is, of course, an idea emphasised in other parts of the New Testament. Thus as St. Paul meditates on the ultimate consummation of his being, he remarks, ' For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.' [1] Similarly the author of the First Epistle of St. John can remark, in the same context, ' Beloved, we are God's children now; it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, *for we shall see him as he is* '. [2] The idea of the vision of God is of course an example of mystical imagery. It refers to a

[1] 1 Cor. 13 : 12 [2] 1 John 3 : 2

condition in which the reality of God will be as immediately and vividly present to us as the objects which we behold with our eyes are vividly and immediately present to us now.

Some contemporary theologians are unduly suspicious of mysticism. There are, of course, non-Christian forms of mysticism, characterised by two beliefs which no Christian can conceivably accept. The first of these is the idea that the mystic can perceive the vision of God by the use of his own unaided powers, short-circuiting, so to speak, man's need of redemption in Christ, and of the grace which comes to man through participation in the life of the Church. The second of these ideas is the notion that the object of the mystic quest is complete absorption into a divine being which is conceived as a kind of impersonal sacred principle in union with which all personality withers and dies. But there is a genuinely Christian mysticism in which neither of these two errors is present. It is in the first place a ' Christ-mysticism '. The Christian becomes one with Christ through incorporation into His Body, and to be one with Him is to be one with the Lord who is ' of one substance ' with the eternal Godhead. Being one with Him we share His unity with the Father. But this is not a unity which obliterates all distinctions. Christian mysticism is dominated by the doctrine of the Trinity, which sees the eternal unity as one which jealously and eternally preserves its component and constituent distinctions. This is a mysticism for which divine grace and eternal personality are basic affirmations. It is the characteristic mysticism of those who in the Spirit come through the Son to the Father, who are caught up in and by Christ into the heart of the life of the eternal Trinity. And this is the mysticism which characterises the New Testament and that vision of the New Jerusalem with which it concludes.

The second characteristic of the doctrine of heaven in the Book of Revelation is community. The Christian mysticism is not an individualistic spirituality which leaves each mystic to the solitary enjoyment of his own private ' aloneness ' with God. On the contrary it is a mysticism which eternally restores the unity of the human race—and indeed of all creation—in a heaven which is a real kingdom as well as a mystical condition. In the Book of Revelation the notions of eternal community and eternal vision are held together, and they are held together by the third of the three conceptions in terms of which we must describe and expound

the New Testament image of heaven. This is the concept of liturgy.

Mysticism, community, liturgy. We may put these three together as a kind of Hegelian triad. At first sight at all events there would appear to be some kind of dialectical opposition between the notions of mystic vision and human community. But liturgy, not the earthly forms but the eternal actuality as we see it in the Book of Revelation, is the synthesis of mysticism and community. Liturgy is our togetherness in the vision, with the vision sustaining and crowning the togetherness, and the togetherness essentially a sharing of that which is both the ground and the glory of human solidarity: 'They shall be my people, and I will be their God.'

This concept of eternal liturgy in heaven must inevitably remind us of the immense significance and real primacy of the role of liturgy in the life of the Church Militant. Some Christian thinkers, possessed by very real and valid doubts and scruples, regard this exaltation of the idea of liturgy, which is characteristic of contemporary Christian thought, as a dangerous tendency because it seems to them to put into the background what they would very justly describe as the 'preaching of the Word'. I want to insist, however, that the performance of the baptismal and eucharistic liturgies is a preaching of the Word, a preaching of the Word not by some individual preacher, however inspired, but by the whole Church, indeed that nothing Christians do together in the Church Militant is more obviously a preaching of the Word, more manifestly an act undertaken in the service of the Word, than the performance of the liturgy. For in the liturgy we set forth before God and man the whole pattern of our redemption. The setting forth of the gospel of redemption in some kind of sermon is, of course, a part of the liturgy, the point at which the liturgy interprets itself, and at which the Church through the preacher interprets the liturgy to its own people. The essential interpreter of the liturgy is the gospel, and the essential setting forth of the gospel, and of our life in the gospel, is the liturgy.

But as we have seen, the liturgy is also an eschatological preparation for our life in the Kingdom, and it must be constantly interpreted in this eschatological context. In particular the eucharist cannot be understood merely in terms of what it commemorates. It must also be interpreted in terms of what it anticipates. It commemorates the incarnation of the King and it

anticipates the coming of the Kingdom. Indeed ' we look before and after ', but most emphatically we do not ' pine for what is not '. We look before and find the past reality present; we look after and find immediately present with us at least the flavour of the ultimate fulfilment. The eucharist symbolises, participates in, is indeed one with, both the mystery of the Incarnation and the mystery of the Kingdom at the same time. It is the pause between two lightnings! It is where Christ reigns, and where, in the Spirit, the material things of the creation, symbolised by bread and wine, and the human things of creation, symbolised by faithful men and women, interact together in a kind of pageant of cosmic obedience to the divine Will. Indeed the eucharist is the Kingdom, for here, in the power of the Spirit, Christ the one mediator, ' the Lord ', rules and reigns. He says to bread, ' Thou art My Body ', and it is His Body; he says to wine, ' Thou art My Blood ', and it is His Blood; and to men and women he says, ' Do this ' and they do it. Wherever and whenever the Will of God, as in the liturgy, is utterly done, there indeed the Kingdom of God has come. Never is the Church Militant more plainly declared to be the Church, never does it so transparently make clear its unity with the eternal Church, so entirely, so vividly, as in the moment of the celebration of the liturgy, when He who not merely speaks but *is* the Word of God is hailed as Lord of creation, Master of men and things.

Evangelism

If the necessity of worship is rooted in the Church's nature, the necessity of evangelism is rooted in the Church Militant's condition. She will not always be the Church Militant. The Church Militant like all the things of time will have its end, but, so long as she is the Church Militant, woe to her if she preach not the gospel in season and out of season, whether men will hear or whether they will forbear. Every empirical omen suggests to us that at all times and in all places some men, perhaps many men, will prefer to forbear. About that we can do nothing. Our task is to preach the gospel, to preach the gospel to unconverted men, or, as so often in the everyday life of the Church, to preach the gospel to half converted men. And all the time as we preach the gospel we know that we are striving to draw men into that greater danger of condemnation in which we stand ourselves. For the gospel is our judge as well as our glory. They that take

the gospel to themselves must either live by the glory of the gospel or perish beneath the judgment of the gospel. It is at the same time both a way of life and a way of death.

The greatest danger that confronts the Church, and the Church's commissioned preachers, as we proclaim the gospel is the possibility that in practice we shall not present the gospel in its integrity to the world, but confuse it with our own prejudices, ideologies, passions and fears, forging God's signature so to speak at the foot of the scroll of merely human ideas. We may think of many examples of this lamentable process. The gospel of the fundamentalist is too obsessed by a fear of honest knowledge which confounds from within the integrity of the faith to which he lays such frenzied claim. The revivalist proclaims the gospel as merely instrumental to an orgy of emotional self-indulgence. Many preachers of the so-called 'social gospel' turn the true gospel into a kind of pseudo-theological sanction for the particular brand of progressive or reactionary politics which they happen to prefer. We desperately need a kind of internal technique of self-analysis, assisted by very scholarly aids and criteria, which will enable us to detect when it is that we are genuinely preaching the gospel and when it is that we are merely putting forward our own ideas in God's Name. Certainly many of those who are most enthusiastic about what they call in their more rhapsodical moments 'the preaching of the Word' hardly ever preach the *Word* at all. In all probability the proportion of contemporary preaching which amounts to genuine evangelism is extremely small.

We have passed through the sugary period in which most of the preachers spoke to us primarily in terms of sweetness and light. Nowadays an increasing proportion seem to prefer death and damnation, usually social death and historical damnation, but death and damnation all the same. Now there is certainly some improvement here, for even social death and historical damnation are nearer to the spirit of the original gospel than the liberal sweetness and light of a quarter of a century ago, of which we can find in the original gospel almost no trace at all. Nevertheless the gospel of death and damnation and existential crisis is still very remote from the New Testament. In the New Testament the gospel is above all the gospel of life and salvation, of life and salvation and transfiguration for all the creatures of God. The sweetness does not cloy like the liberal sweetness, and the light is more

dazzling and less cosy, but the true sweetness of the knowledge of God and the white light of the glory of God are indeed there.

The evangelist's primary task is not to threaten the world with judgment, for judgment falls in the first place upon the Church, but so faithfully to pass on to the world the New Testament promise of life that the Church herself may escape judgment.

And this life, of course, is in Jesus Christ our Lord. The preaching of the gospel is not the preaching of so-called ' Christian principles ', whether of personal or social integrity. It is neither a sociological preaching nor a psychological preaching. It is essentially a proclamation of the Lordship of the Christ, Christ Incarnate, Christ crucified, Christ risen. He does not merely teach a way of life; He *is the* way of life. He does not merely point to the existential manner and methodology of salvation; He is our salvation. He does not merely proclaim the Word of God, He is the Word of God, God's living Word, an act of God in the midst of the storm and stress of human history which speaks to us more eloquently of God's being and purpose than any merely spoken word can conceivably do. He is that in the life of the Church which is ' the same yesterday, and today and forever '.[1] In the life of the Church nothing may be added to the gospel testimony to the Christ, and nothing may be taken away from it. He is the Lord of history and Master of the cosmos, the Agent of creation and the Architect of the Kingdom, the light of human existence and the substance of human hope, and at the same time the Jesus of history who was born of Mary at Bethlehem, grew to manhood in Galilee, preached in the wilderness around Jordan, perished in Jerusalem during the government of Pontius Pilate, and rose miraculously from the dead. No man comes to the Father except through Him, and He and He alone is ' the image of the invisible God '. In Him we find the grace and power of God, and in Him, and in the last resort in Him alone, we find the truth of God. This is the gospel; and we have no other. This is the whole content and burden of the evangelistic message. If to say that the gospel in its integrity is utterly fundamental to the Christian preaching is to be a fundamentalist, then indeed I am a fundamentalist. Of course I am not a fundamentalist, but I do agree that there are indeed fundamentals aside from which the Church of God dare not swerve by a hair's breadth.

[1] Heb. 13 : 18

To proclaim these things in season and out of season is to be an evangelical. I wish to be quite simple and direct in my profession of faith. I am an evangelical. The gospel which the evangelical proclaims is the gospel of the Catholic Church; and woe to any self-styled ' Catholic ' who proclaims any other gospel but this!

Of course the Church Militant cannot exist by the proclamation of the gospel alone. Side by side with the gospel, and yet always in strict subsurvience to the gospel, she has, and must have, a communicable objective ' Faith ' capable of being taught, in terms of which she can interpret and expound the meaning of the gospel and relate it critically and constructively to everything else in human life.

It is difficult in practice to draw any precise lines between the proclamation of the gospel and the teaching of the faith. The one shades off imperceptibly into the other. Nor is there any real reason why we should try to draw any precise line between them. The proclaimed gospel, however, has the same kind of priority over the conceptualised and taught faith as fact has over theory in the development of the natural sciences. The gospel proclaims the saving *facts* which the theological faith grasps, interprets, analyses, relates and expounds. But in practice, as we have seen, the preaching of the gospel and the teaching of the gospel-generated faith are two kindred activities which go hand in hand together in the evangelical life of the Church Militant.

To what in man does the gospel make its appeal? Nowadays there is a great deal of talk in some circles within the Church about the way in which the gospel manifests itself as *the* gospel by showing its adequacy to meet human needs. No doubt there is some truth in this, provided that we are careful to remember that in this fallen and distorted world men are not necessarily conscious of their deepest needs, and that many of the presumed needs of which they are conscious are not real needs at all. The great bulk of our popular advertising addresses itself to what are taken to be human needs by a vast number of people, but most of them—like ' keeping up with the Joneses ' or seeming successful or making a good social impression—are entirely spurious. Of human needs in the deepest sense vast numbers of our contemporaries have no consciousness whatever. Modern life has estranged them from reality. Over a century ago Frederick Denison Maurice remarked that the modern world appears to be producing a new

type of man to whom the gospel cannot be preached. This new type of man is perhaps the man who is quite unconscious of the basic needs and requirements of the human spirit. His concept of man is either primarily physiological or primarily psychological, and the category of spiritual interpretation is quite unknown to him because the facts of human existence which require and necessitate the use of that category have entirely eluded his consciousness. In fact the proclamation of what the true human needs are has now become a part of the proclamation of the gospel, so that man's consciousness of human need is no longer a consciousness of his own real condition which can be presumed and taken for granted by the evangelist, and used as that essential datum or given fact in man to which the gospel can be addressed.

A second error very prevalent among those who talk glibly about the way in which the gospel is addressed to human needs, or to the basic elements of the human condition, is the idea that because these needs are deeply rooted in human subjectivity, so deeply rooted that they usually elude the somewhat shallow self-consciousness of modern pathologically extraverted man, these needs have therefore of themselves a subjective character. On the contrary man's deepest subjective characteristic, as he sees clearly enough once he becomes conscious of the basic needs of human existence, is a craving for objective truth about objective reality. It is the sheer objectivity of the gospel that makes it the only possible response to man's deepest subjective needs. The gospel meets our basic human need, which may be correctly diagnosed by a really probing and intelligent existentialist philosophy, by proclaiming an objective, an abiding truth which remains true whether it seems to meet our needs or not.

The profoundest of all subjective passions is the subjective passion for the objective. The truly honest and awakened man, vividly aware of his own elemental human needs, cannot proclaim anything as true simply because it meets his subjective needs. In certain areas of Christian thought today there is a grave danger of what I should call an existentialist idolatry. In so far as our minds are really honest, we dare not proclaim the Christ to be the Lord of our existence on purely existentialist grounds, because the existentialist ground of truth is not the ground which really satisfies that passion for truth which is given to us as one of the basic elements of human existence. We dare not acclaim the

Christ as the Lord of our subjectivity unless we are satisfied that we have good grounds for proclaiming the Christ as the objective Lord of history; and we dare not proclaim the Christ the objective Lord of history unless we are equally satisfied that we have good grounds for reverencing Him as the transcendent Lord of the cosmos, included eternally in the everlasting Godhead. Merely to proclaim Him Lord of existence on purely existentialist grounds, while remaining silent as to His objective status in relation to history and the cosmos, would be to set Him up as an idol, and also incidentally to frustrate one of the deepest and most elementary of our existential needs.

The point of all this is that the gospel must always be proclaimed as objectively true and never merely as existentially useful or necessary. We cannot use the divine in the service of even our highest and most spiritual purposes. Indeed we cannot *use* the divine at all. The idea of using divine power in the service of human purposes is a characteristic of the depravity of human religion. This remains true whether the human services in which we attempt to use the divine power are either noble and spiritual or terrestrial and mean. Magic, superstition and the crude evaluation of prayer in terms of the so-called ' power of prayer ', of what it is alleged to do or produce or lead to, the so-called ' power of positive thinking ' and so on, have more in common with many contemporary existentialist accounts and interpretations of Christianity than at first sight meets the eye. God is emphatically not the servant of human existence, nor entirely taken up with the ' needs ' of human beings. The real purpose of the gospel events is not the meeting of human needs, however profoundly we diagnose and expound them, but the implementation of God's purpose to establish His Kingdom. In so far as this involves the meeting of certain native human needs, the fact that the gospel does so, and the extent to which it does so, is always a kind of by-product of its central purpose, the purpose of God in creation, redemption and salvation which reigns as sovereign in and for the gospel not merely alone but also without any possible rival. The gospel is the gospel of the unique reality of God, of the utter sovereignty of His purpose, of the action which God has taken in Christ to fulfil that purpose, and only lastly, or almost as though by a kind of after-thought, of the glory of man's eternal place within that purpose. Too many of these

contemporary existential accounts of the gospel itself, and of the way in which the gospel must be preached, read like attempts to commit the Church to the intolerable and preposterous paradox of an anthropocentric theology! We must, on the contrary, insist that the gospel of the Church, like the faith of the Church and the worship of the Church, like also the Christian account of the basic meaning and purpose of human existence, is radically theocentric. If man's basic need for the vision of God is indeed utterly and entirely met in the Kingdom of God, it will matter very little whether any of his other needs are satisfied or not. Only in this last and ultimate analysis can we clearly see that that which man most urgently needs necessarily and completely coincides with that which his Creator requires of him and to which He has predestined him.

The Pastoral Ministry

The sole agent of human sanctification is the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless it is also true that again and again in the life of the Church one human being will find himself so related to another that he is called upon to function in the service of the Holy Spirit and instrumentally to His purposes, in such a way as makes him the visible minister of sanctification to others. This is obviously true of those who are ordained and commissioned by the Church to care for and watch over the growth of human souls in the spiritual life, though it is quite frequently true also of those members of the Church whom we customarily, and rather misleadingly, describe as the laity. We have already seen that it follows from the deepest nature of the Church considered as a priestly body that in the ordinary, popular sense of the word there are no laity. The Church has no members who are by nature entirely devoid of pastoral responsibilities. On the other hand the pastoral responsibilities of the ordained clergy constitute the primary stuff of their existence, and it is their office and work which we shall have chiefly in mind in this phase of our discussion.

For the most part ' the Christian life ' consists in that process of growth into Christ which is technically called sanctification. It is unfortunately true that some elements of Christendom have come to lay such great stress on the phenomenon of justification or conversion, and the dramatic form of it experienced by large numbers of people, that the process of sanctification, though they

usually acknowledge its necessity and actuality, has fallen rather into the background of their thinking. The passage from sheer worldliness to membership of the Body of Christ so fascinates and obsesses their thought that for all practical purposes it sometimes seems as though, once man has made the difficult and traumatic decision of faith and transferred his existence from the world to the Church, nothing very important remains to be done except to entertain a lively recollection of his conversion and remain faithfully where conversion has placed him. This is perhaps the root cause of the depressing prevalence of so much spiritual mediocrity in so many parts of Christendom.

The first duty of the pastor is to banish from his mind his kindly but mistaken tolerance of spiritual mediocrity. There is much too much talk about the human race as consisting for the most part of ' little people '. We are even told that God must love ' little people ' because He has made so many of them. One result is that many of those who are, from the point of view of their present condition, ' little people ' can even develop a smug complacency about being ' little people ', believing perhaps that it is the big people who do most of the harm in the world and that if only all the people were ' little people ' mankind would be very happy. This is an almost satanic parody of Christian humility. It is perhaps the real bane and corruption of the contemporary Church. The children of God have no right to be so little. The destiny of man, in accordance with the Will of God, is not human littleness but human greatness. God's people are a great people, predestined to glory, growing through the Christian life, with all its ways of sanctification, towards that transfiguration of the human reality in the Kingdom of God which will reveal all men as supermen.

The Christian pastor, I would suggest, would do well to make the writings of Nietzsche a part of his staple spiritual diet. Nietzsche was emphatically not a Christian, and perhaps his chief reason for not being a Christian was the obvious spiritual mediocrity of most of the Christians he knew. Søren Kierkegaard, while remaining a Christian, observed very much the same phenomenon and his last work in life was a vehement attack on the spiritual mediocrity of the Christian Church as he knew it in Denmark. But the element in Christianity which Nietzsche grasped so firmly is precisely that which so many of our spiritual

pastors have completely forgotten, that man is destined for greatness and heroic glory, and that we must expect to see the shape of his destiny casting its great shadows before it even here and now. No doubt Nietzsche, having no other Christian element in his thought, grossly misinterpreted this basic principle, and his followers, or those who thought themselves to be his followers, were to fall even further from grace. Nevertheless it is better to misinterpret a great truth than not to interpret it at all. The idea of the superman is in fact a Christian idea, a part of any adequate theology of the Kingdom of God. The Christian is not meant to remain either what he is now or where he is now, but to advance in sanctification towards that ' measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ ' which will indeed be seen to be man's true stature in the Kingdom of God. In its own profound way Christianity is indeed a humanism. Not the modern, so-called ' scientific humanism ' which comforts and panders to ' little men ' with social welfare schemes and higher standards of living, but a heroic humanism, not unlike Nietzsche's, in which the whole spirit of man rises up and transcends the cosy comforts and petty respectabilities of ordinary, decent worldliness, to be transfigured at last in the blinding light of the vision of God.

The essential pastoral task, in the power of the Holy Spirit and instrumentally to His work, is to prepare human beings for greatness, to help them grow by sensible and visible stages towards that greatness, to make the transition from the temporal to the eternal, which is even more momentous and dramatic than that first transition from worldliness to the Church which we call conversion. The thought itself can be found in St. Paul. The saint well knows that he has been converted and ' justified by faith ', but something yet remains, and that which remains is even more tremendous than that which he has already experienced. ' Not that I have already obtained this (i.e. the resurrection) or am already made perfect; but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me His own. Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but one thing I do, *forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead*, I press on towards the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.' [1] He then adds, ' Let those of us who are mature be thus minded; and if in anything you are otherwise minded, God will

[1] Philip. 3 : 12–14

reveal that also to you.'[1] This revelation of the necessity of spiritual progress in sanctification towards the vision of God, is a revelation committed in the Church primarily to the care of the ordained pastor.

It must be said at once that there are currents of thought in the contemporary Church which tend towards an entirely different conception of the pastoral ministry, falling well below the level of the New Testament insight. The present passion for psychological and psychiatric aids and techniques in the minds of so many pastors is giving them a primarily psychiatric conception of their office and function. From this point of view the danger is that the essential purpose of the pastoral ministry will be interpreted not in terms of fostering and sustaining growth in sanctification, into the Body of Christ and towards the vision of God, but as an effort to assist sorely tried people to exist in some kind of psychological health and integrity from moment to moment, so that the crucial transition from the point of view of the pastoral ministry will cease to be the transition from the temporal to the eternal and become the merely temporal transition from one instant of time to another. The growth of such an attitude towards the pastoral office and function will inevitably stultify and negate its central purpose.

Of course the contemporary passion for psychology and psychiatry among so many Christian thinkers, greatly aided by the vogue of existentialist philosophy, has other and perhaps even worse results than this. Indeed it threatens to corrupt and enervate the Church's theology itself. For certain contemporary theologians, or pseudo-theologians, the events proclaimed in the gospel are treated as though they were in fact psychological and existential symbols. We may bracket together here Bultmann and Paul Tillich, although we could hardly bracket them together in any other context. To do this is surely to stand Christian symbolism, so to speak, on its head. Usually we take that which stands closest to our immediate experience to symbolise that which stands a little further away. Thus we might very well use psychological and psychiatric concepts and experiences to symbolise the events of the gospel, just as the events of the gospel themselves symbolise for us the eternal realities of the being and purpose of God. There is something strangely unnatural and inappropriate about using the symbolism the other way round.

[1] Philip. 3 : 15

Thus Shelley can say of the skylark, soaring so high that it is almost lost to sight, as

> 'Like a poet hidden
> In the light of thought.'

No doubt Shelley was more familiar with the depths of poetic experience than with skylarks, but he forgot that most of his readers, although not particularly familiar with the habits of skylarks, are even less familiar with the depth of poetic experience. It is surely obvious that normally we should liken the poet to a symbolic skylark rather than compare the skylark to a symbolic poet. Certainly what really matters about the events which are proclaimed in the gospel is not what they symbolise for an existentialist, still less for a psychiatrist, but first what they are in themselves, and secondly what they were intended to symbolise by God in ordaining them and by the Church in proclaiming them. The contemporary existentialist and psychiatric trend in theological thought results in a kind of intellectual ' topsy-turvydom ' which is, at all events for the moment, a rather serious matter. Indeed some of the younger devotees of this cult are rapidly losing any capacity for thinking straight about objective realities which they must surely once have possessed. They see fallen man wallowing in psychological traumas and existential glooms clearly enough, but can they clearly observe the objective being and action of God, and the outlines of His eternal purpose to establish the Kingdom? I suspect not. Too often for them redemption becomes a psychiatric process, and the Kingdom a psychological condition. They have lost touch with the objectivities of the faith and the gospel in their over-concentration on the disordered subjectivities of fallen man, which so urgently require precisely that objectivity, if they are ever to be reordered in accordance with the pattern of God's eternal and objective plan.

Perhaps more serious still is the way in which these developments cause us to forget, what perhaps many of these zealots never knew, that Christendom has its own psychology, its own empirical study, or rather studies, of the psychology of man under sanctification, its own carefully and profoundly conceptualised account of the ' stages on life's way '.

Can there be a special psychology of Christian man? I see no reason why not. If it is elsewhere permissible to undertake special

psychological studies of the characteristics and propensities of man in particular contexts, like European working-class districts, or the culture of Bali Island, or of women in a feminist society, I see no reason why there should not be an equally specialised account of the characteristics and propensities of man subject to the process of sanctification in the Christian Church.

In fact a vast literature both descriptive of the data with which we find ourselves confronted in this area of experience, and endeavouring to interpret it in terms of illuminating concepts, has slowly, and not always slowly, been building itself up during many centuries of the Church's life. The study of this literature, and of course of the realities with which it deals, is usually called Ascetic or Mystical Theology, but it might perhaps be better to call it Christian psychology, provided we mean by that phrase the psychology of the Christian man under the conditions of sanctification, and not merely a general psychology illicitly dominated by theological concepts.

Ordinary psychology is very naturally and properly the psychology of fallen man existing in this fallen world, and considered in abstraction from the possibility of sanctification. It has a great deal to teach the evangelist, but it is only of very limited use to the pastor. He has to deal with people for the most part under conditions of sanctification, existing in the milieu in which sanctification takes place. The man whose ministry is primarily pastoral should make Ascetic or Mystical Theology his continual study, and regard this subject as above all others the one in which he is supposed to be and ought to be a specialist. It has of course its great classics, Augustine's *Confessions*, the *De Diligendo Deo* and the *De Gradibus Humilitatis* of St. Bernard, the works of St. Bonaventura, the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius, St. John of the Cross, and many more. Perhaps the sole protestant contribution of any outstanding excellence to the development of this great subject is to be found in the *Either–Or* and the *Stages of Life's Way* of Søren Kierkegaard. If this last example represents the only major protestant contribution to the subject, it must very gladly and in all fairness be confessed that it is a magnificent contribution indeed. Nearly all these writers in one way or another develop some kind of conceptualised doctrine of the soul's spiritual progress in sanctification, of what Kierkegaard called ' the stages on life's way ', a sketch, so to speak, of true man's growth

towards his true greatness. Perhaps at no point is Christian theology so radically empirical, and the fascination and profit of this literature can hardly be exaggerated. Yet to how many pastors is it almost or even entirely unknown? How many of our clergy have gone right through a period of exacting preparation for ordination without ever being introduced to it by their teachers? Yet this literature contains the essential body of knowledge in which the Christian pastor must be expert if he is to fulfil his function as the ordained instrument of the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification.

Of course there is no reason why this mystical theology should not be related to psychology as we now know it at some deeper level, perhaps to the mutual profit of both sciences. Indeed it is just possible that some aspiring young man who should happen to read these lines may feel inwardly called to make such a study in synthesis his chief way of service to the developing thought of the Church. But to relate the two properly is not to interpret either wholly in terms of the other. Synthesis is never subsumption. If we interpret A wholly in terms of B we make no real contribution to the expansion and development of B. Mystical theology would introduce psychology to dimensions which it is usually compelled and prone to ignore, to depths which it is not usually forced to examine, to aspects and orientations of the human reality which are as yet almost unknown to it. Perhaps the challenge of mystical theology is what contemporary psychology needs more than anything else. It must learn to relate man to the angels as well as to the brutes, to the divine as well as to the erotic, to see him not as the crown and summit of an evolutionary process but as the missing link that fills in the gap between the creation and the Creator, based on the one and orientated towards the other, with the orientation as much and as significant a part of his nature as the foundation. The primary study of the pastor, however, must be in mystical theology rather than in psychology. This is the science which wrestles with the realities with which he must wrestle, and for that very reason this is the science which provides him with the clues and concepts in the light of which he will most fruitfully operate. The true material or subject matter of the pastoral ministry is man under sanctification, growing towards his true greatness in the vision of God. To minister to such a process must surely be numbered among the highest and most utterly

humbling of all the characteristic functions and activities of the Church Militant.

The Prophetic Ministry

The function of the prophet is to interpret to the Chosen People the ways of God in history and to discern and proclaim the revelation of the divine purpose in history by interpreting all history in terms of the judgment and mercy of God. He speaks in the first place of the judgment and mercy of God upon the Church Militant itself. 'The time is come for judgment to begin at the house of God.'[1] That indeed is for the prophetic consciousness always the time, and the house of God is always the place. The prophet's declaration of judgment against the world must always be primarily a declaration of judgment against the worldliness of the Church, against the world as it intrudes itself into the Church, against the world as it masks and attempts to maintain itself by turning the truths of the gospel and the faith into ideologies which may appear to support and sustain its own existence. By a kind of logical extension this prophetic judgment against the Church is transformed into the Church's judgment of the world, a denunciation of the wickedness of the world at precisely the point at which it is most clearly seen to be wicked, that is, when it insinuates itself into the Christian context, and the contrast between the worldliness of the world and the essential nature of the Church is made visible in its starkest and most vivid form. It is at least clearly seen that worldliness only corrupts the Church because it also corrupts the world.

Perhaps in the contemporary situation the point at which the Church stands most sorely in need of the prophetic witness is the constant proposal made in many forms that the Church should employ the world's methods in order to further its own proper purposes. The idea that any device found successful in the service of earthly purposes may conveniently and properly be transferred to the service of the purpose of God in the Church is one fraught with terrible moral and theological dangers. It varies from suggestions that the Church should raise money by organising mass gambling to proposals that it should employ the resources of advertising and mass publicity in order to 'put across' its gospel. But this latter suggestion ignores the very real possibility that

[1] 1 Pet. 4 : 17

modern methods of advertising and mass publicity are in their essential nature exploitations of the weakness of fallen man's psychology. (Religious revivalism and the exploitations of group psychology and ' group dynamics ' in the service of the gospel fall under the same kind of condemnation.) These methods are indeed effective in a fallen world precisely because they exploit fallen man's weaknesses. The Christian proposal and aim is to create a new kind of man in Christ who will be totally immune to these degrading appeals and approaches. We cannot with any integrity base our Christian work upon human weaknesses which it is our real intention to abolish. The very strength of proposals of this kind in Christian discussion at the present time is a sign of the existence of worldliness in the Church, of a corrupting entanglement in the secular culture round about us against which the prophetic consciousness of the Church must vehemently protest.

The Church Militant is not a kind of ' religionised ' version of the world in which it finds itself. It is essentially a revolution against and a rejection of that world. Perhaps that is why true prophets are almost always unpopular until after their death. Certain it is that in the Church Militant, as among the Hebraic Chosen People, the prophet is indispensably necessary to the integrity of the corporate life of that community which is God's earthly instrument.

It is probably true that, at all events in the context of His Second Israel, the Church Militant, God raises up comparatively few voices of the genuinely prophetic type. Much of the work which was once performed through the prophets, with their visionary language, is done in the Church through the more prosaic methods of careful and discriminating theological and ethical judgment. Nevertheless a genuine ministry of prophetic disentanglement of the Church from the world, precisely in order that the Church in its integrity may speak directly and uncompromisingly to the world in its fallen and disordered condition, is an essential part of the total life of the Church Militant. If our prophets are few they are correspondingly more precious, and we must always take heed lest we ignore them. If we ignore the prophets we may too easily forget the salutary biblical conception of the wickedness of the world. For to ignore the wickedness of the world is to encourage the wickedness of the Church; to imitate

the secularity of the world is to obscure the clear outlines of the eternal and divine order which we must learn to glimpse in the Church; to admire the world is not to worship God with the wholeness of our being. Nowadays the wickedness of the world is a theme not too frequently stressed by the preachers of the gospel —and this may be partly the result of the perverse and cliché-ridden way in which so many puritanical preachers of the gospel in the past have located and diagnosed the wickedness of the world in the wrong places—but the wickedness of the world is both a biblical theme and an empirical reality, and to dismiss it lightly or to ignore it altogether is to overthrow the whole balance of the gospel message.

4

THE AUTHORITY OF THE CHURCH MILITANT

THE question of the authority of the Church Militant is a much bigger one than a mere demonstration of what it is in the Church Mllitant that is authoritative. We must distinguish carefully between a doctrine of the authority *of* the Church and a doctrine of authority *in* the Church—whether it be Holy Scripture, Pope or General Council—and distinguish both from the even profounder matter of the Holy Spirit's authority *over* the Church. Clearly the question of the authority *of* the Church is prior to the question of the channels *in* the Church through which the authority *of* the Church may express itself upon various occasions.

Scripture, popes and general councils alike function as channels of authority on specific occasions, but no one of them is equally authoritative all the time. Thus Scripture is authoritative because it contains the gospel in and by which the Church lives. On the other hand there are many things in Christianity which are received and reverenced as authoritative by the common consent of almost all Christians at all places and times which are not to be found in Holy Scripture—e.g. the use of Sunday as the principal day of worship in the week—and conversely there are passages in Holy Scripture which are not regarded as authoritative by any Christians —apart perhaps from a few eccentric and deviant sects—e.g. the Hebrew food laws contained in the Old Testament. Similarly almost all non-papalist Christians would agree in accepting and reverencing some papal promulgations—e.g. the Tome of St. Leo —and conversely not even the most ultramontane papalist would dream of accepting every promulgation of every pope as authoritative—e.g. a great many fervent Roman Catholics are noticeably unenthusiastic about the two celebrated sociological encyclicals, so often rightly admired by non-Roman Catholic Christians, *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*. The same thing is true of

general councils. The Nicene formula ' of one substance with the Father ' has received the well-nigh universal consent of the whole of Christendom, but the other decisions and enactments of that celebrated council are entirely neglected and forgotten except by erudite historians. I conclude from this fact that although scripture, pope and general council often contain and speak for the authoritative, they are not intrinsically authoritative and they never constitute the real authority. In a word the real authority is always the authority of the Holy Spirit *over* the whole Church, speaking to us now through Holy Scripture, now through popes, now through general councils, and using the mind and general consent of all Christendom as a way of indicating precisely *what* in Scripture, pope and general council is really authoritative and bears the stamp of the Spirit upon it, and distinguishing it from that which is merely human and relative or merely timely.

But the question of authority in the Church comes much more closely home to all of us than that. In the everyday life of the Church Militant the question of authority is primarily the question of the authority with which the gospel is proclaimed and the faith taught, the authority invested in and invoked by the parish priest as he preaches in his pulpit, or as he teaches the confirmation class in the church school. There is no doubt that during the period of the great vogue of what was usually rather clumsily called the ' liberal theology ', or Christian ' modernism ', the authority of the preacher almost completely disappeared, and he was reduced to handing out an assortment of his own opinions decked about with citations of and quotations from notable scholars whom he happened to admire. In such circumstances the gospel lost its imperative note. I am reminded of the story of a modernist curate in a London church about thirty years or so ago who felt it incumbent upon him to close his Advent Sunday sermon with a strong and stirring appeal to the hearts of his people. ' My brethren ', he cried with an oratorical flourish, ' if we repent—to a certain extent—and if we confess our sins—in a way—we shall be saved—as it were.'

However, with the revival of genuine gospel preaching and the renewal of biblical faith the demand for a much stronger doctrine of authority becomes more and more insistent. It is often said by older and, in the proper sense of the word, reactionary theologians and scholars that this demand for a stronger doctrine of authority

is a sign that the younger generation really wants an excuse for not bothering to think out its problems for itself. There may, of course, be some truth in this, and perhaps we should always be charitable enough to remember that the Christian Church includes many far from useless people, certainly people whom God loves and for whom Christ died, who lack the necessary intellectual equipment and educational background with which to think out their problems for themselves. Nevertheless this is not the real reason for desiring a stronger doctrine of authority. In fact the stronger doctrine of authority is one of the things that has got to be thought out. It is not an excuse for intellectual inertia, rather it must itself be one of the themes and fruits of intense and searching intellectual activity. As I see it, there can be no return to biblical fundamentalism, papalism or that semi-deification of general councils at one time so popular among Anglo-Catholics. As we have seen, all three have functioned in history as channels of authority, but quite clearly they are none of them intrinsically authoritative in the sense of being equally authoritative all the time. A mere doctrine of authority *in* the Church will not do. What we need is a doctrine of the authority *of* the Church, and that must always be grounded in the last resort in our doctrine of the authority of the Holy Spirit *over* the Church.

Always it is true that in human affairs the authority vested in an institution or a group of individuals is a by-product of and dependent upon the extent to which they are visibly under authority. Thus, for example, in the natural sciences a very high degree of authority is vested in the community or consensus of scientific experts, but this is precisely because those who acknowledge their authority are convinced that the scientific experts themselves are to a very high degree under the authority of the facts in relation to which their expertness is accepted as authoritative, and also under the authority of reason as defined in and expressed through their scientific methodology. Similarly the authority of theologians and experts in the Christian Church, whether interpreting Scripture, or advising popes about forthcoming promulgations, or gathered together in general councils, is very largely dependent upon the extent to which they are visibly seen and felt to be acting under the authority of theological facts, of reason as defined by and expressed in the theological method, and through both these channels supremely under the authority

of the Holy Spirit Himself. Thus the doctrine of the authority *of* the Church turns out to be one derivative aspect of the authority of the Holy Spirit *over* the Church.

The Authority of the Liturgy

To return for a moment to the problem of the Christian preacher desiring, as a man of integrity, to be reasonably assured that what he says in his pulpit carries with it the authority of the Church and the gospel, and is not merely an outpouring of his own private opinions. We can suggest at least one test, rather a rule-of-thumb empirical test, which can be applied without too much difficulty. Matthew Arnold once said that he had a simple criterion for determining whether a new poem could be accounted true poetry or not. He used about eight passages from the classic poets which had been almost universally acclaimed as examples of poetry at its very best. He would read over the new poem in the context of these classic passages and then ask himself the question whether the new poem could possibly hold up its head and live amidst such surroundings. The preacher who has to preach in the context of the liturgy—and one wonders whether it is really a good practice to preach in any other context—may employ the liturgy in a rather similar way. He may ask himself whether his proposed sermon can possibly live and hold up its head when set side by side with the liturgy. When we have to preach in the course of the liturgy it is always true that to some extent we are setting forth the gospel which we preach or the faith which we expound as a kind of interpretation of what it is that the faithful are doing when they come together to perform the liturgy. As we have already seen, it is the function of the liturgy to repeat and perpetuate the patterns of the divine redemptive action which we proclaim in the gospel and expound in our theology. In this sense the liturgy is obviously the most authoritative element in Christian practice and provides us with a kind of touchstone of authority. The sermon which is at one with the liturgy, which befits its liturgical context, is similarly an authoritative sermon. On the other hand the sermon which when preached in the liturgy leaves us with a sense of anti-climax, irrelevance or downright bad taste, is quite clearly a non-authoritative sermon, an expression of the preacher's personality rather than of the Church's mind, the verdict of the preacher's own private spirit rather than of the Holy Spirit.

This question of the intrinsic authoritativeness of the liturgy has recently been raised again in a most interesting way by Professor Turner in his Bampton Lectures, *The Pattern of Christian Truth*. He points out that, obviously enough, heresy precedes formulated orthodoxy in the history of the Church. Orthodoxy is only formulated in response to the challenge of heresy. But this at once raises the question, how could the Church know that heresy was heresy in the absence of a formulated orthodoxy which would clearly indicate its heretical character? Or, as we might rephrase the question, where was orthodoxy before the Church formulated it? To this he replies, in effect, 'First of all in the biblical data which constitute the heart of the gospel proclamation, and secondly in the liturgy or *lex orandi* of the Church in which the worshippers bear their witness to the biblical data and actually worship in accordance with the same basic patterns which we find inherent in the biblical data.' 'The biblical data are mediated through the *lex orandi* of the Church. All the major doctrines of orthodoxy were lived devotionally as part of the corporate experience of the Church before their theological development became a matter of urgent necessity. From primitive times, Christianity believed trinitarianly before the doctrine of the Trinity began to be thought out conceptually. The Divinity of Christ was an axiom of the spiritual life before theologians turned their attention to the doctrine of the Incarnation. A certain eucharistic realism formed part of the liturgical tradition before the development even of the rudimentary eucharistic theology of the early Church. It is almost a truism to say that the life of the Church was logically prior to any attempt to construct the theology of her nature, still less of her structure.' [1] We would add that even with the coming of formulated orthodoxy the liturgy or *lex orandi* of the Church still retains the authoritative place in the Church's life which it had possessed from the beginning, and it can still be used in practice by the Christian preacher as a touchstone which will reveal to him the authoritative or non-authoritative character of his proposed sermon.

If the Church is seen to be supremely authoritative in its ordering and setting forth and performance of its liturgy—always with the proviso that it is the essential function of liturgy to repeat and perpetuate the pattern of divine redemptive action which the

[1] Op. cit., p. 474

Church proclaims when she declares the gospel, and that all actual liturgy must be judged by this standard—then it would appear to follow from this that at no point in its visible life is the Church so manifestly under the authority of the Holy Spirit as at the moment of liturgical action. It is a grave and most unbiblical error to trace the workings of the Holy Spirit only in the inspiration of individual persons. We are told in the Acts of the Apostles that at Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended when the members of the original Christian community 'were all with one accord in one place'.[1] If the Holy Spirit inspires individuals He also inspires communities. In the Bible, as we have already seen, the divine choice is always primarily the choice of a people, and only secondarily the choice and inspiration of individual persons in order that they may serve and guide the people. We know from the woeful history of theology at a much later date what a sorry confusion the Calvinists made of the theory of divine election when it began to be assumed that God's choice is primarily the election of individuals out of the world rather than the election of a whole people to serve as the instruments of His purpose to redeem the world.

The inspiration of individual persons, side by side with and contained in the inspiration of the whole people of God, has in its own way a kind of dialectical character. Each process checks and counter-checks the other. Not all that passes for individual inspiration really proceeds from the Holy Spirit, and we must always test the spirits whether they be of God. At least one way of testing whether an apparent spirit of individual inspiration really comes from God is to ask whether it is animated by and conducive to a genuine love of God's Church.

Similarly not all that passes for group inspiration really proceeds from the Holy Spirit. Modern group psychology indicates very clearly what unholy spirits they often are that animate the soul of the crowd. The Holy Spirit is not the spirit which animates any group. He is certainly not the spirit of the Church's gregariousness. Indeed the Church is not, in any sense known to group psychology and sociology, a group at all. The mystical Body of Christ is not a crowd of Christians. Thus we have to test the spirits of the group also. We may say that the real voice of the Holy Spirit in the Church is to be found in the coincidence of the

[1] Acts 2 : 1

Spirit which inspires corporate liturgical worship, on the one hand, and the Spirit which inspires the individual prophet on the other. The prophet enables us to distinguish the Holy Spirit in the Church from the group spirit animating a random crowd of Christians, and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, revealed in the Church's worship and in the heart of its life, enables us to distinguish between genuine prophetic inspiration and mere uprushes from the individual sub-conscious. Neither is a safe guide except when scrutinised and criticised in the light of the other. It is the spirit of prophecy and the spirit of liturgy, in the convergence of their testimony, which is most clearly seen to be and experienced as the voice of the Holy Spirit Himself. We may say that we are always in grave danger either of idolatory, or of an undiscriminating spiritual enthusiasm which may lead us to deviate from the heart of the life of the Body of Christ, whenever we make the main diet of our spiritual life either the performance of the liturgy without a prophetic sermon or the cult of the prophetic sermon outside the context of the liturgy. It is the sermon preached by the inspired individual within the context of the inspired Church, the reality of the Spirit in the one bearing witness to the spirit of reality in the other, which constitutes what we may call the essential Christian norm. These things speak to us most authoritatively when they speak to us in their convergence.

This recognition of the Holy Spirit both in inspired community and in inspired personality is of course, however essential, always a somewhat embarrassing thing in a fallen world, where even truly inspired personality will sometimes find itself at loggerheads with inspired community, and even inspired community will sometimes feel inwardly tempted to reject inspired personality. In neither case will the validity of the inspiration entirely remove the dangerous consequences of human sin. Inspired personality is subject to impatience; inspired community may be visited by fits of inertia. We must always remember that in the experience and teaching of St. Paul the Holy Spirit is even more supremely the source of the charity which alone can give the Church Militant its unity than the source of the inspiration which is the ground of the Church Militant's abiding vitality. The charismatic gifts of inspiration the Holy Spirit pours out as and when He will—this is the theme of 1 Corinthians 12—but the more excellent gifts of faith, hope and charity, He pours out ceaselessly upon us all—

that is the theme of 1 Corinthians 13. Without faith, hope and charity, inspiration will divide us; conversely faith, hope and charity alone without inspiration and charismatic gifts would leave the Church a mighty rudderless ark without guidance or direction in stormy seas.

The Way of the Holy Spirit in the Church

The Holy Spirit is the source of the plurality as well as the ground of the unity of the Church. It is His doing that we find within the one Church that plurality of human vocations which so constantly tend, when misinterpreted, as it so often is, to divide Christians and set them over against each other. The golden rule in the Church of God is always to reverence and value the vocations of other people. This vast plurality of vocations falls into two primary classes or groups. There are those vocations to make manifest the divine transcendence by one form or another of the ascetic refusal of the creatures. By far the most important of the various types of ascetic self-discipline in Christian history is the vocation to what is technically called ' the religious life '. Side by side with this are those vocations which call men to make manifest the divine immanence in the visible Christian use of the creatures —here we may instance marriage, the figures of the Christian aesthete and intellectual, and the whole spectacle presented by those Christians who insist on enjoying the creaturely things of life in a spirit of devout gratitude and thanksgiving. It is important to emphasise that these are both vocations which come from the Holy Spirit, both equally essential to the whole balance of the Christian witness. The danger is that we may attempt to interpret either as a higher vocation than the other.

One form of this regrettable tendency is the so-called ' double standard ' theological interpretation of the religious life which achieved maximum vogue during the middle ages and is still to be found surviving here and there, particularly in the Roman and Eastern Orthodox Churches. It was conceded that the vocation to manifest the divine immanence in the Christian enjoyment of the creatures was not bad in itself, but the vocation to manifest the divine transcendence in the religious life was treated as an altogether higher and nobler thing.

The protestant reaction against this after the Reformation was even worse, because here we find the religious life altogether

rejected as entirely evil. As a kind of substitute for it the so-called lay life was honeycombed by the puritans with sporadic refusals of the creatures. The puritan substitute for the religious life gradually degenerated into a few odd negative enthusiasms, like that zealous cult of total abstinence from alcoholic liquors which is the cause of so much consternation and perplexity among the great majority of Christians, who cannot make any practical sense of it, and inwardly suspect that its real theological implications are of a most disastrous character. The result was that compromised, mediocre piety against which Søren Kierkegaard thundered with such prophetic violence, a mere religious respectability which is incapable of bearing really whole-hearted witness to either the divine transcendence or the divine immanence, but remains in a state of uneasy oscillation between the two, neither altogether affirming the goodness of the creatures nor with total ascetic self-abnegation proclaiming the ultimate sole-sufficiency of the Creator.

The normal way of the Holy Spirit in the Church has been to call some men to bear witness to the one truth and some to bear witness to the other. And this in a state of complete equality, for no man can do more than whole-heartedly fulfil his vocation. Whether it be in the religious life or in the life of the world the Christian can serve utterly, and in so doing make the wholeness of the pattern plain. For the integrity of the Church is not the integrity of the Christian individual. He finds his integrity in playing his part in maintaining the integrity of the whole Church, which is one under the Spirit not in spite but because of the essential variety of Christian vocations.

We conclude from this somewhat digressive discussion that the authority of the Holy Spirit *over* the Church Militant is the true source and ground of the authority *of* the Church Militant, which in the course of its history is exercised through a plurality of institutional channels and vocations. We have still to examine the question, however, by what intellectual techniques we can best ascertain what it is in the life of the Church which is most truly and significantly authoritative. And here perhaps we may conveniently turn for guidance to that intellectual formula hallowed for so long among Anglicans—Scripture, experience, reason.

Scripture, Experience and Reason

(*a*) *Scripture*. We have already noticed that Scripture is authoritative primarily because it contains the gospel which is the foundation of the Church's life and the cause of its eternal validity. It is obvious that not all parts of Scripture are accepted in the Church as equally authoritative. From St. Paul's time onwards, for example, the Jewish Law has not been regarded as binding on gentile Christians, though there is much to be said perhaps for the view that the Jewish Christians should after conversion continue to observe the Law, as a sign that a man does not cease to be a good Jew merely because he becomes a Christian. But certainly no Christian would now suggest that it is necessary for gentiles to keep the Law because they have become biblical Christians. Obviously Scripture does not inhabit one level plateau of equal authority. More than that, our principle indicates clearly that the supreme act of authoritative Scripture is to point to an authority, the authority of Christ, which transcends its own authority, and under which and as a participation in which its own authority exists. It is customary in many parts of Christendom to describe the Bible as the 'Word of God', but the meaning of this title is misinterpreted if it is taken to imply that all the words of Scripture are words of God. The Bible may rightly be called the Word of God because it contains the words of God, and at the moment of supreme testimony points to the Word of God, for at the climax of the biblical witness the phrase the 'Word of God' is not used to describe the Bible itself but rather to point beyond the Bible to the Christ who is the Lord of the Bible. At this climax the Bible, so to speak, exhausts itself in the supreme gesture which points beyond the Bible to the Christ.

Thus the Bible is authoritative in so far as it is clearly seen to be under authority. Interpreted in any other fashion than in terms of the Christ, in any other way than as a record of the preparation for the Christ and as a series of testimonies to the Christ, the Bible is not authoritative. It is authoritative only in so far as its authority is plainly subject to and manifestly participates in His authority. All other ways of interpreting Scripture—and there are other ways of interpreting Scripture which have at least *prima facie* plausibility—empty the Bible of its authority,

which is in any case only a moonlike reflection of that authority which is supremely His.

(*b*) *Experience.* The experience which is regarded as authoritative in this formula is not of course human experience in general, although that cannot be entirely eliminated from consideration. Rather it is that form of specifically Christian experience, continuous with human experience in general but transcending it, which is enjoyed by the Christian man striving to live the Christian life in the context of the Christian Church. The treasures which this experience brings into the orbit of our human vision are stored up and accumulated in what we may call the traditions of the Christian Church, which consists very largely of a reservoir of recorded Christian experience and discovery expressed in a vast and varied literature built up slowly through the centuries for the profit and delight of Christian men. It is an intellectual and philosophical literature; it is an autobiographical, existential, devotional and mystical literature; it is an ethical literature; but above all it is a liturgical literature, existing not only to be read but also to be used. The supreme form of Christian literature is liturgical literature.

And here we see, if anything with even greater clarity, the same pattern which emerged as we briefly analysed the authority of Scripture. This literature is authoritative precisely because it is under authority, precisely because at its peak moments it points beyond itself to an authority which transcends, undergirds and overmasters its own. The supreme climax of the liturgy is the moment at which it confronts us with the manifest presence of the Lord of the liturgy who transcends the liturgy. The general principle is again clear. Nothing human—nothing, that is, which belongs merely to the life of the Church Militant—can ever possess absolute authority, and the relative authority with which such things are vested always depends on the extent to which they function under the absolute authority of the Christ, and can properly be interpreted as participations in His authority which are instrumental to the purposes of that authority. Both authority *in* the Church Militant and the authority *of* the Church Militant are forms of relative authority which may be described as the sacramental matter in and through which this absolute authority is made manifest to mortal man.

(*c*) *Reason.* Strangely enough the same pattern occurs even

here. When we speak of the authority of reason we do not mean the authority primarily of our own subjective reasoning. We know well enough how mistaken our own reasoning can be, how easily it can be perverted and twisted into mere ideology, or semi-pathological rationalisation. Our own private reasoning has only a relative authority, dependent upon the extent to which it is under the authority of the perfect and ideal reasoning which transcends it. If my reasoning is not under the authority of objective reasoning, is not a continual process of humble deference to it, then it has no authority.

This is inevitably the claim which the human reasoner always makes whenever he feels compelled by the process of his reasoning to make a bold truth-claim for his conclusions. If he is wise, of course, he will often refrain from making any truth-claim for his conclusions. 'This is where my reasoning has led me,' he may say, 'and while not making an absolute truth-claim for my decision, it does seem to me that it embodies a more adequate formula than any which has yet been brought forward, and I suggest that we continue on the basis of this formula until something even more adequate is forthcoming!' In particular it is this kind of qualified truth-claim which is often most appropriate in both science and theology. There may be moments, however, when the thinker feels compelled to make a more absolute claim, and when he does so what he is really saying is that the result of his reasoning must be accepted, not because it is the result of his reasoning, but because, at least in this particular case, his reasoning has participated in and is representative of an eternal reason which transcends his reasoning, and because this eternal reason has absolute authority. His reasoning in consequence possesses a certain relative authority in so far as it is visibly seen to be under the dominion of the eternal reason. In the past some mathematicians and mathematically inspired rationalist philosophers have put forward a claim of this kind. Whether they were right or wrong need not concern us here. Indeed, we should not invalidate our main principle even if we were to concede that no absolute truth-claim of this kind has ever in actual fact been validly put forward by anyone. It would still remain true that when human reasoning rises to the peak of its powers this is the kind of gesture that it must make, i.e. it must point beyond itself and its own authority to the absolute authority of the eternal

reason or *logos*, in the service of which and under the guidance of which, human reasoning possesses that relative authority which human culture, in my view rightly and inevitably, has always attributed to it. In Scripture and in the Christian tradition this eternal *logos*, who is the Lord of thought and the only master of the intellectual life, is identified with the cosmic figure of the Christ.

Thus the basic pattern of authority, whether we consider it in the case of Scripture or Christian experience or reason, is identically the same. Each of these three represents a relative authority which is most authoritative when it points beyond itself to an authority higher than its own, and this authority is the authority of the Christ exercised through the power of the Holy Spirit and made sacramentally manifest in the matter provided by these diverse forms of relative human authority.

But we have not yet concluded this analytic exposition of our hallowed Anglican formula: Scripture, experience, reason. For these three are not authoritative primarily in their separation and singularity; they are supremely authoritative at the point of their convergence. It is when Scripture and Christian experience, accumulated and summed up in the richness of Christian tradition, and reason converge in their testimony, when like the persons of the Trinity these three are seen to be one, that they become supremely authoritative. Scripture in defiance of tradition (Protestantism) and Scripture in defiance of reason (fundamentalism) is neither genuine nor authoritative Scripture; tradition in defiance of Scripture (Romanism) and tradition in defiance of reason (obscurantism) is neither genuine nor authoritative tradition; reason in defiance of Scripture (rationalist—in the bad sense of the word—anti-empiricism) and reason in defiance of tradition (rationalist—in the bad sense of the word—anti-historicism) is neither genuine nor authoritative reason. It is when each supplements and reinforces the other that we can be most surely convinced that we are moving to the very heart of Christian truth.

Infallibility

In my view this classical Anglican formula represents the most efficient test at our disposal for distinguishing between the authoritative and non-authoritative elements that compose the

richly varied and intricately tangled life of the Church Militant. They supply a criterion by means of which we can detect the authoritative from the non-authoritative, but they do not enable us to decide precisely what the authoritative is once we have detected it. Is it necessary to suppose that the authoritative is the same thing as the infallible? On the whole, modern and recent Anglican thought and scholarship has agreed with most protestant but anti-fundamentalist thought and scholarship in giving a negative answer to this question. The humanly authoritative, it is argued, remains relative even in its highest moments, and we can reverence it as the highest approximation we possess to the divine authority without claiming absolute authority or infallibility for it. It is this whole question which I should like briefly to re-open.

The problem of infallibility exposes the Christian thinker to a serious dilemma. On the one hand if he really believes in the power of Christ over his Church, and in particular in the power of Christ exercised through the Holy Spirit over the Church Militant in history, he finds it difficult to deny altogether that there must be elements of infallibility woven into the texture and running throughout the length and breadth of its tradition, rather like the thin fine thread of prophecy which is woven into the texture of the history of Israel. On the other hand he is compelled to admit—even if he is a Roman Catholic—that the life and tradition of the Church Militant does not consist exclusively of infallibility. The moment he attempts to say precisely which elements in the Church's life are the infallible ones he finds himself driven to some kind of position in which he is compelled to say, not only that there are infallible elements running through the history of Christ's Church, but that he infallibly knows precisely which they are. He begins by claiming infallibility for the Church but he inevitably winds up by claiming infallibility for himself, or if not for himself alone at least for himself in collaboration with his peers.

We can see the pattern of this melancholy dialectical development in the way in which the theory of papal infallibility has gradually manoeuvred itself into its present ridiculous impasse. The Pope speaks sometimes fallibly sometimes infallibly. But have we any means of infallibly knowing precisely when he is doing the one and when he is doing the other? If we only know and recognise the infallible fallibly, then it would appear that we

never really know for certain whether any particular papal promulgation is infallible or not. This would appear to imply that all papal promulgations are at least suspect of fallibility, unless we have some external means of infallibly knowing when the Pope is speaking infallibly. The argument that the Pope never speaks infallibly without drawing explicit attention to the fact will not meet the case. So many of the most important promulgations in the past—including some, like the Tome of St. Leo, which are among the most promising candidates for the honour of infallibility—do not contain any explicit assertion of this kind because the Pope at that time may not have had the least suspicion in the world that he ever could or would speak infallibly. (I am not indulging at this point in a kind of pathological ' no popery ' prejudice, a diseased state of mind from which I sincerely believe myself to be entirely free. In my view the Popes have often spoken excellently in the past, and I hope and believe that they will do so in the future. It is the faulty logic of the theory of infallibility, not the institution of the papacy as such, which is the target of the present criticism.)

I feel reduced to the position that we must believe that there are indeed elements of infallibility running through the length and breadth of the traditions of the Church, but that we have no infallible means of knowing precisely which they are. Probably this is a great mercy from God, for men are not at their best at those moments in which they feel themselves to possess an absolutely infallible knowledge, or to be inspired by some spirit of infallibility. On the other hand, at those points at which Scripture, experience and reason coincide in their testimony in some supremely significant way we may very well feel the overwhelming probability that here we are in touch with one of those elements of infallibility which on general grounds we must believe to be inherent in the life of the Church.

Some time ago I was reading a review by a professional historian of Sir Winston Churchill's *History of England.* The reviewer remarked very justly that this was certainly not a history written by a professional historian, but added that it should not on that account be ignored by professional historians. Churchill is dealing with historical characters who again and again in the history of England have stood in positions very like those in which he has stood, and wrestled with situations very similar to those

with which he has found himself confronted. We may instance Alfred the Great, Queen Elizabeth I and William Pitt. He knows, as the professional historian does not know, precisely what it feels like to be immediately confronted with dilemmas like these, so that he is enabled to bring a wealth of personal insight into his understanding of such episodes such as perhaps no other living historian could hope to have at his command. No doubt, the reviewer pointed out, his interpretations will sometimes be wrong, but the probability is that even more often they will be right.

Let us suppose, for the sake of example, that he is right seven times out of ten. Of course this formula would not enable us to say for certain that he is right in any particular case. For any particular case might be one of the three cases out of ten in which he is wrong. Nevertheless we shall still be able to say that some particular case is very probably, perhaps even almost certainly, one of the seven particular cases out of ten in which he is right. This illustrates the view of infallibility which I am now putting forward. We know that the fallible life of the Church Militant, since it is a true part of Christ's body and filled with the power of the Holy Spirit leading and guiding us into all truth, must necessarily be shot through with elements of infallibility. In no particular case can we say absolutely for certain that it is one of these instances of infallibility, but in the many cases in which we discover a maximum convergence of Scripture, tradition and reason we may say that very probably, perhaps almost certainly, we are here in touch with one of the elements of infallibility which we must believe to be present. The infallible is fallibly known and recognised, but nevertheless it does exist in the life of the Church Militant, and its importance for our faith and hope can hardly be overestimated. Despite all its fallibilities and failures, in the life of the Church Militant we are in touch with the power and guidance of God. The gates of Hell shall never entirely prevail against the Church, and similarly, perhaps consequently, we must say, that the gates of error will never entirely close upon, to enclose, the faithful.

II

THE CHURCH OF CANTERBURY—ITS PROMISE AND PERPLEXITIES

5

THE NATURE OF ANGLICANISM

THE problem of the nature and definition of Anglicanism cannot be left to the historians. Clearly there is some connection between what Anglicanism was at the point when it embarked upon its phase of independent existence, and what Anglicanism, in the providence of God, has now become, and what, even more important, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is in the process of becoming. But the answer to the first, purely historical, question cannot be allowed altogether to determine the answers to the two subsequent questions. Anglicanism as it now is and is becoming is certainly not anything which was present to the minds of, and actively willed by, Cranmer, Henry VIII and the statesmen and high ecclesiastics of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The nature of Anglicanism cannot even be determined by examining the Anglican literature of the seventeenth century, which is certainly the expression of what we may call the golden age of classical Anglicanism. The seventeenth century witnessed the first clear formulation of what was to become the distinctively Anglican ethos and point of view, but nevertheless contemporary Anglicanism is no more a seventeenth-century than a sixteenth-century phenomenon.

We may describe the movement of Anglican history as one from compromise to synthesis, from the middle way to the total way. It begins by steering cautiously between two extremes, but we can already see, in the light of more than four centuries of history, that it can only end by comprehending the two extremes, by including two points of view which, through a series of lamentable historical accidents, have come to interpret themselves as antithetical, in one rich, coherent synthesis which will enable us to recover the wholeness of the Catholic Faith.

Perhaps we may best open the discussion by some attempt to describe Anglicanism as it now is. Such a description will make possible some diagnosis and prevision of the line of development

which Anglicanism is pursuing, under the guidance of the Spirit, and so enable us to say clearly what Anglicanism is capable of becoming in the future, and what sooner or later it must become in order to fulfil its own promise.

To many non-Anglican Christians Anglicanism is a baffling and perplexing phenomenon. The period of its separated existence dates from the sixteenth-century Reformation, and obviously that Reformation forms an essential part of its history. Yet it is equally obvious that its subsequent history differs to a marked degree from that of the other reformation churches and distinguishes it from them in a very fundamental way. We may say this is because the Anglican Communion is a 'reformed Church' but not a 'Reformation Church'. In the light of Anglican history the Reformation has to be interpreted in terms of continuity rather than in terms of discontinuity. As Anglicans read their own history, and understand and interpret all Christian history through their own historical experience, the Reformation stands out as a genuine *re*formation of a pre-existing reality which was provided for and given to Anglicanism by its pre-Anglican history. It is an episode in Anglican existence and not the beginning of Anglican existence. When Anglicans go back to the beginnings they return, like the great reformers themselves, not to the reformers but to the patristric Christianity of the early Church and ultimately to the Apostolic witness itself. The lack of any semi-idolatry of the reformers is something which Anglicans have in common with the reformers. Conversely the exaggerated deference to the opinion of the reformers characteristic of so many of the Reformation churches is something which sharply distinguishes these churches from the reformers.

To non-Anglican Catholics the spectacle provided by the actuality of Anglicanism is almost equally scandalous if not more so. Here is a group of Christians who have certainly retained a great many Catholic institutions, and in a large number of cases a wide catholicity of outlook, the zeal and profundity of which can hardly be denied, and yet they accept a tradition which undeniably owes much to the Reformation, and reverence the Reformation as a part of their own history.

The greatest difficulty seems to be that as between these two distinct poles of emphasis there are notoriously wide differences of outlook and practice within the Anglican Communion itself, so

that the perplexed observer finds it difficult to decide precisely what it is that holds the Anglican Communion together. Those who emphasise its catholicity perhaps lay less stress on its kinship to the Reformation, and those who are emphatic about its reformationism are less vocal about its catholicity. On the other hand there are very few Anglicans indeed who deny any kinship with the Reformation, and perhaps even fewer who would give no value at all to its catholicity.

We may helpfully distinguish living Anglicans into three groups. There are those Anglicans who, if Anglicanism did not exist, would probably find their place in one of the great Reformation churches (e.g. in Presbyterianism). At the other end of the scale there are those Anglicans who, if Anglicanism did not exist, would find their spiritual home in the Roman Church. These two groups are indeed greatly divided about many things, but they are united at least by this, that since Anglicanism does exist they choose to be Anglicans. Their probable second choices divide them, but their actual first choice unites them. We may distinguish a third group who would honestly say that if Anglicanism did not exist they would probably have no place to go at all, for to be quite frank—and I think it essential in the present position of Christendom that we should be absolutely frank on all occasions—they find both the alternatives, *either* Romanism *or* Protestantism, utterly unacceptable and in fact too appalling even to contemplate. For this third group Anglicanism is the only possible spiritual home. For what it is worth it is to this third group that I myself belong. This third group, however, should be carefully distinguished from the large number of moderate or central Anglicans who still cling to the idea of the Anglican compromise or middle way. These moderate or central Anglicans probably constitute an actual majority of the forty million or so Anglicans who are to be found in the world today, and yet I am inclined to think that from the point of view of the future of Anglicanism these central Anglicans form the least significant group and have least to contribute. It is the first two groups, very largely guided by the third group, in whose hand the destiny of Anglicanism truly rests.

I have already described that destiny as a movement from compromise to synthesis, as a passage from the middle way to the total way. And here I am prepared to make the bold claim that

ultimately the destiny of Anglicanism is the destiny of Christendom. The ending of the schism of Western Christendom which has characterised the last four hundred years will not come about through compromise, because too much of the truth is to be found at the two extremes, nor will it come about through the total victory of one extreme over the other, for then the truth represented by the defeated extreme would be lost to the Christian world. The clue to reunion is not to be found in the Anglican compromise, nor in some future victory of one Anglican party over the other. The way to the reunion of all Christendom is to be found in the Anglican synthesis.

At the moment Anglicanism contains no more than the promise of that synthesis. For the most part Anglicans, as Anglicanism is, are split up into catholic-minded Anglicans on the one hand and more or less evangelical Anglicans on the other, merely existing side by side *in Anglicanism*, at best in a state of mutual toleration, and at worst somewhat uneasily in a condition of chronic controversy. We have now to move forward from this not very ideal situation. Yet our past history indicates clearly the lines along which we must develop. We must move on from merely being what we are *in Anglicanism* to becoming genuinely Anglican, to becoming what we must become if the promise of Anglicanism is to be fulfilled. We can only move on from being *either* catholic *or* evangelical *in Anglicanism* by realising in our spiritual lives, as well as in our thought and outlook, the integrity of Anglicanism by becoming *both* catholic *and* evangelical at the same time, not merely bridging but eliminating the gap between the two extremes. It is not enough for catholic and evangelical convictions to co-exist in one Church, they must co-exist in one churchman. Such a development is neither so hazardous nor so difficult as it sounds, for genuine Catholicity is not the negation of evangelical Christianity, just as truly evangelical Christianity is not the negation of the catholic faith and life. The truth is not to be found at the point at which the extremes separate—for that point is the dreary, tragic division between Catholic and Protestant which is the stark reality in every other area of Christendom apart from Anglicanism—but at the point where the extremes meet, that is in Anglicanism.

We may say briefly that the essence of Anglicanism, whether considered as a historical or a contemporary phenomenon, is the

proposal to contain the validities of the Reformation protest within the context of Catholic institutions. For the Reformation protest is only properly understood when we interpret it as a prophetic purgation of our Catholicism, necessitated not so much by the historical corruption of Catholics as by the richness of the Catholic achievement. The moment we interpret the great reformers as prophets we see at once that their first duty is to the Israel of God which nourished them and brought them forth. Indeed the second Israel of God is the only proper province and constituency of the reformers. We have already noticed that the Hebrew prophets did not prophesy against Israel because of any lack of love for or loyalty to Israel. On the contrary they prophesied against Israel because they loved it, and wanted to see it visibly worthy of its calling. For the same reason to prophesy against Israel is to speak from within Israel. A prophecy against Israel delivered from outside Israel, and by prophets who had separated themselves from Israel, could have had no possible effect. The Reformation protest is valid and timely only when it is delivered in and accepted by the Catholic Church. In any other context it is irrelevant, and indeed something of an impertinence. In the strict sense of the word the Reformation is an episode in the history of the Catholic Church, and its proper product is not the multiplicity of existing protestant institutions, but the survival of the purged and reformed catholic institutions. Clearly this observation necessitates and requires a somewhat unconventional estimate of the meaning and validity of the Reformation protest, and to this we must now turn.

The Reformation Protest

The essential nature and religious depth of the Reformation protest is a matter concerning which modern and contemporary protestant controversialists are quite as unjust to the Reformers as many Roman Catholic writers. Too often the Reformation is interpreted, from both points of view, in terms of what in fact emerged out of it at long last, rather than of what it was in itself. Thus, for example, it is frequently interpreted on both sides in terms of religious individualism, of the claim to a right of unfettered private judgment in theological matters and in the interpretation of the Scriptures, the protestant writers praising the Reformation as the foundation of modern civil liberty while their

catholic opponents censure it as the principal cause of modern religious anarchy. Yet the reformers themselves are most unjustly praised or blamed by either of these interpretations, for they were certainly not concerned with any right to unfettered private judgment, nor were they particularly interested in civil liberty either in religious or in any other matters. Still more unfair is the interpretation of the Reformation in terms of its historical connections with the rise of nationalism in politics and capitalism in economics. Insofar as there is any historical basis for these charges it is subsequent to the work of the reformers and aside from their real intention. The surprising thing is that both Protestant and Roman Catholic controversialists agree to such an extraordinary extent about the facts, and differ only in the interpretation they put upon the facts. Thus I have heard the Reformation assailed as the cause of modern capitalism and defended enthusiastically on precisely the same grounds. But to interpret the Reformation after such a fashion as this is to interpret it in terms of historical accidents rather than in terms of the serious and central concerns and purposes of the reformers themselves. In their own minds they were interested neither in the newly emerging nation state nor in the genesis of a so-called free economy. Their real task was to protest with violence and vehemence that the gospel of the indispensability and all sufficiency of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely central to and regulative of the entire range of the life and thought of the Church Militant.

The very word *protestare* from which we derive the words *protest* and *protestant* originally had a positive rather than a negative sense. Nowadays we usually protest against things which we dislike, but at that time and long before it men protested on behalf of things which they regarded as absolutely fundamental. Thus the use of this verb *protestare* in this positive sense can be found in St. Thomas Aquinas. The protestant is a protestant in the strict sense of the word because he protests that he is saved ' by faith alone '. Again the slightly ambiguous phrase ' justification by faith ' does not properly mean that *I* am justified by *my* faith (regarded as a kind of internal spiritual work). On the contrary justification by faith means that it is my faith that Christ and Christ alone is my justifier. Good works may indeed follow as an expression of faith, as a testimony of my gratitude to my

Saviour, but the good works are nevertheless not the cause of my salvation. It is Christ and Christ alone who saves me.

We may very well say as we look back on this past episode in Christian history that the Lutheran insistence on the phrase 'justification by faith alone' was an unfortunate one. The formula is too ambiguous to do justice to the depth and lucidity of Luther's insight. No doubt at a later time it did tend to turn into the idea that we are saved by our own faith, by the subjective quality of our own piety. No doubt too the intense concentration on justification did become an unbalanced one, which led to the subsequent processes of sanctification through the Holy Spirit and in the life of the Church becoming more and more neglected by the Protestant mind as it developed through the centuries. F. D. Maurice makes it his principal objection to the Lutheran system, as distinguished from the witness of Luther himself, 'that it does not bear witness to the all importance of that fact which Luther asserted to be all important; that it teaches us to believe in justification by faith instead of to believe in a justifier; that it substitutes for Christ a certain notion or scheme of Christianity.' [1] But in so far as this charge is true it cannot be laid at the door of Luther himself.

If we consider what justification by faith meant for and to Luther, rather than what, owing to the ambiguity of the phrase, it was capable of degenerating into, we shall see at once that it is an essential element of the purest Catholic orthodoxy. Indeed, as F. D. Maurice pointed out, the so-called doctrine of justification by faith is really one way of stating the doctrine of the atonement. The French Roman Catholic theologian, Louis Bouyer, in his excellent book *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*, quotes freely from the sixth-century Second Council of Orange, fully confirmed by Pope Boniface II in his Bull *Per Filium Nostrum*, issued in 531, in order to illustrate this very point. There can be no doubt that in this matter Luther was speaking out of the heart of the catholic tradition. His intention was to reassert radically what we may call the Christo-centric principle. Salvation is through Christ and Christ alone. Had Luther selected for his slogan the phrase *Christe solo* instead of *fide sola* the subsequent difficulties might well have been avoided.

What I am arguing here is that if by the doctrine of justification

[1] *The Kingdom of Christ* (Everyman Ed.) Vol. 1, p. 217 f.

by faith we mean what Luther meant by it, and not what, owing to the ambiguity of the formula, it could mistakenly but plausibly be taken to mean, then in fact it is a statement characteristic not of the Lutherans but of the whole of Christendom. Why then did Luther feel moved to assert it so emphatically as he did; and why did so many of his contemporary fellow Christians feel so profoundly moved to reject it? The answer in my view is that tension which must always exist in the Church Militant in one form or another between the Christian gospel and the Christian religion.

Is Christianity a religion? At first sight it would seem that this question must obviously be answered in the affirmative. Undeniably Christianity plays a role in Christian existence analogous to the role of Buddhism in Buddhist existence, Mahommedanism in Moslem existence and Communism in Communist existence. If we are content with a definition couched simply in terms of function then surely we must say that Christianity is indeed a religion. On the other hand there are very great difficulties about the assignment of Christianity to the membership of any class whatsoever. Christianity is *sui generis*, and the mere fact that we can trace analogies in Christianity, or in the earthly functioning of Christianity, with non-Christian beliefs and institutions does not necessarily justify us in confounding it with them under the same class name. Religion after all is a human activity. We find religious beliefs and practices of one sort or another in every human culture known to history or social anthropology. But the central Christian idea of explicit revelation and unique redemption through the Incarnation takes us outside the realm of religion considered as a human activity into the realm of salvation considered as a divine act. Christianity confronts us with the stark contrast between the words of men about God, quite often very good words, and the Word of God about God. In other words the Christian affirmation of the essential, indispensable role of the Incarnate Lord in human salvation, takes Christianity outside the realm of religion. Thus there is much to be said for the formula *Christianity is not a religion but the Gospel*, the gospel of the unique act of God in Jesus Christ.

Yet we can hardly insist on this formula too strongly without failing to do justice to some of the obvious facts. The analogies with the religions are clearly present in Christianity, and they

must be taken seriously. Thus we find in Christianity intellectual doctrines, liturgies and ways of prayer, formulated ethical systems and, in the Church Militant, social institutions of an undeniably religious character. We find these things in Christianity because they must be there if men are to respond together continuously in history to the gospel itself. We may say that the gospel transcends all human religion, but that it is not therefore wholly other than human religion or completely discontinuous with it. The religious element in Christianity is the element of human response to the gospel, and the systematic form which that response under the pressure of the gospel inevitably assumes. Human religion is taken up and redeemed rather than merely negatived and nullified by Christianity. Christianity considered as the redemption of all human things is necessarily the redemption of religion also. Thus Christianity is above all *the* gospel—which means that Christianity transcends religion and is taken out of and beyond the category of religion—but Christianity is also a religion of response to the gospel—which means that it is to some extent nevertheless a religion. We may describe it as the coincidence of the gospel of divine initiative with the religion of human response. But this also means that the religious element in Christianity must always function in strict subordination to the transcendental gospel to which it is the response. We may call this the basic evangelical principle of the supremacy of the gospel in the Church. For the Church Militant, in so far as it connotes earthly human response, is a religious reality, but it can only be and remain a Christian religious reality in so far as its religious behaviour is entirely controlled by the gospel. To insist that this is true, and to protest it violently whenever the course of history obscures this truth, is to be an evangelical Christian. Thus to be an evangelical Christian is not to be a non-Catholic, still less an anti-Catholic, Christian; it is simply to insist that the sovereignty of the gospel is the essence of the catholic faith.

But to isolate this sovereignty of the gospel from any possible religious element in Christianity is a false way of emphasising this basic truth. The principle of the sovereignty of the gospel implies that this sovereignty is exercised by the gospel in tension with another reality which genuinely exists in subordination to itself. To deprive the gospel of any possible subject of its sovereignty is to void its sovereignty. It is rather like proposing that all the

subjects of some great monarch should be summarily executed in order that the grandeur and greatness of his rule should shine forth in solitary splendour. We need two realities in order to make a visible sovereignty—that which is sovereign and that over which it is sovereign. The sovereignty of the gospel over Christianity is measured and made manifest for the visible obedience of the Christian religion to the everlasting gospel of God.

Of course it would be humanly impossible to have simply the sovereignty of the gospel without any system of human response at all. As F. D. Maurice saw so clearly, what finally emerged, and had to emerge, out of the Reformation protest were the protestant systems of human response, in which all the sins and failings of historic catholic Christianity were recapitulated. We exchanged the great Church for the little churches, a chaos of competing religious systems in place of the one great system. Nor did the sins and corruptions of the protestant systems differ so very markedly from those of the catholic system against which they rebelled. They were characterised on the whole by what we may call middle-class moderation—mediocrity would be a harsher word, but it would not be entirely unjust—and contemporary protestantism is as desperately in need of the eternally valid Reformation protest as contemporary catholicism, in some cases perhaps even more so. If the Reformation protest must inevitably be contained in some kind of system it is surely better that it should be contained in the historic catholic system rather than in some sixteenth-century substitute hastily improvised for the purpose.

But why was this evangelical protest so desperately necessary at the time of the Reformation? No doubt in part because of the intellectual and spiritual failure of the catholic system in the shock and crisis of the Renaissance, which had been creeping up on it slowly during the preceding centuries. It was the modernity or modernism of the contemporary brand of catholicism, rather than its devotion to tradition and antiquity, which so shocked and scandalised Luther's soul. But a more profound element in the whole tragedy than the visible and colourful corruptions was the very success and imposing grandeur of the system. It was because of the magnificence of the mediaeval Catholicism, even more than because of its corruption, that men were tempted to forget the sovereignty of the gospel over the system, and so to

invert the proper relationship as to make the system sovereign over the gospel. They were tempted and they fell. As always, the sins of good men rather than the sins of bad ones were the real cause of the trouble. The integrity of the religious institutions of the Church Militant began to seem more important than the integrity of the gospel and the Body of Christ. It was forgotten that the Church Militant exists by glorifying Christianity, and now it seemed as though Christianity existed to glorify the Church Militant. This is a sixteenth-century perspective which has lingered on long after the period in which it was really relevant. But in the sixteenth century itself it was a natural and indeed an inevitable way of looking at existing conditions. The Christian religious system had indeed wandered away from its basic principle of the sovereignty of the gospel, and it was necessary that that basic principle should be violently reasserted. It is very important that a discontent with the protestant systems and with the way in which they ringed round and hedged in the basic Reformation protest with a narrow and circumscribing wall of negation, should not blind us to the validity and importance of the Reformation protest itself. Reformationism, as distinct from systematic protestantism, I take to be essential to the health and integrity of catholicism. For a catholicism without evangelical roots presents the paradox of a Christian system of religious response to the gospel which has forgotten the sovereignty and transcendence of that to which it responds, and this is a travesty of response.

It may be objected that in this discussion I have fallen into the error of interpreting Anglicanism in one way and Protestantism in another. In a sense this is true. I have certainly assumed that the essence of Anglicanism is to be expressed in terms of what it is now visibly becoming, and will more and more become, rather than in terms of what it was in the beginning, whereas the essence of Protestantism is to be found in the original protest of the great reformers rather than in what Protestantism has since become and is more and more becoming. Protestantism is a great historical *event*; Anglicanism a great historical *process*. They demand different categories of interpretation because they differ in nature.

There is certainly an appearance of inconsistency here, and I can only plead that in each case I have adopted the point of view which is most charitable and optimistic as well as most appropriate. The grandeur of Anglicanism is not to be found in the

original Anglican *via media*; though from the first pregnant with promise of what was to come, it is in every way inferior to the Anglican synthesis which we can now see to be emerging. On the other hand the original protestantism of the reformers is infinitely superior to contemporary protestant systems. Protestantism is at its best when it takes the form of a ' back to the reformers ' movement; Anglicanism is at its best when it takes the form of an ' onwards to the Anglican synthesis ' movement. I can at least plead that my apparent inconsistency at this point is simply a verbal and intellectual inconsistency which underlies the deeper consistency of a charitable and ecumenical purpose, the desire to interpret and evaluate the phenomena which confront us in terms of what they are at their very best rather than of what they are at their worst.

I would suggest and recommend that non-Roman Christians should interpret Roman Catholicism also in the same charitable and ecumenical spirit. Romanism, like Anglicanism and Protestantism, is often as bad as its most antagonistic critics say it is. Such critics err not so much by what they observe and say—for the corruptions often pointed out so gleefully really exist—but rather by what they ignore—for the great values which go so far towards redeeming the corruptions are equally real—and these positive values must be given the greater emphasis in any charitable and honest account of the facts. Thus most of the defects of Anglicanism pointed out by its critics, who may very well be devoted Anglicans, are real enough, but to point to these defects and to ignore the growing reality and extraordinary potentialities of the Anglican synthesis is to be unrealistic as well as unkind. Similarly the sinfulness and corruption of protestant sectarianism is obvious, but to ignore the fact that behind all this sinfulness and corruption lie the positive and perennial values of the Reformation protest is again to be unrealistic as well as unkind. Similarly the superstition, obscurantism, authoritarianism, and sometimes downright idolatry of popular Romanism and much in the Romanist system, are undeniable facts, but to draw attention to these things while ignoring the depths of Roman Catholic spirituality, the power of its philosophical penetration and the majesty of its world-wide unity is once more to be unrealistic as well as unkind. Wherever we look in contemporary Christendom we see clearly enough that the Body of Christ is incarnate in a

fallen world, but if we look with the eyes of faith, hope and charity, we shall see also the redeeming features that always make Christianity, even in its divided condition, whether Anglican, Protestant or Roman, something which is still the visible embodiment and repository of the one real hope of mankind.

The Anglican Reformation

This account of the permanently valid elements of the Reformation protest makes it clear that the Reformation protest considered from the point of view of its positive content contains no essentially anti-Catholic element. In so far as it is a protest against anything it is a protest not against catholicism but against the Romanist subversion of something which is essential to the health and integrity of the Catholic faith, that is, the sovereignty of the gospel over the Christian religion. Thus the historic Anglican decision to contain the Reformation protest, and to retain it, within the context of catholic institutions is not so strange and paradoxical a programme as it appears to so many protestant observers. The Anglicans wanted a new spirit but not a new system. They took advantage, of course, of a favourable historical situation which made this experiment possible. The fact that this experiment was possible, and was indeed undertaken, may yet turn out to be the most fateful and important of all the developments which took place in the sixteenth century.

For the very existence and success of the Anglican communion calls in question a maxim which is too often and too easily taken for granted both among Roman Catholics and among the great majority of protestants, that is, that the Catholic Faith and the Reformation protest are logically incompatible, and that the line between them is an ultimate dividing line which compels us to stand either on the one side or the other. On the contrary, the existence of the Anglican communion implies that the tragic division between the two has resulted, not from any essential clash of irreducible principles, but rather from the melancholy accidents of sixteenth-century history, the emerging schisms perpetuated by lack of sympathy and understanding, by prejudice rather than by insight. Above all Anglicanism has no need of the negative ideologies which in the Reformation churches have cramped and confined, sometimes almost suffocated, the Reformation protest. For the real purpose of these negative ideologies has been to

defend, not the Reformation protest itself properly understood, but the characteristic Reformation institutions. Lacking these characteristic institutions the Anglican communion has no need of the negative ideologies which bolster them up. The positive values of the Reformation protest, the Anglican must claim, are stronger and healthier for the absence of these institutions. The burden of defending them is too heavy; the necessity of loyally maintaining them too divisive of Christendom as a whole; the Reformation message sounds more purely and penetratingly when it is purged of any sectional design to perpetuate the Reformation institutions.

Of course to evaluate the Anglican Reformation in this way is not necessarily to adopt an uncritical attitude towards its positive performance. The precise details of the Anglican Reformation are not sacrosanct even for Anglicans. There can be no doubt—or at all events there is no doubt in my mind—that under the influence of the violent emotions and strong prejudices of that troubled time the Anglican Reformation, while rightly professing an ideal of moderation, went further in a revolutionary direction than was either necessary or required by its own principles. Its purging of the tradition eliminated not only much that was corrupt and harmful but also many things that were in their own way valuable and worthy of preservation. Nothing essential to the integrity of the Catholic Faith was sacrificed, but many desirable things were lost, so that a patient work of recovery was necessary at a later date, and this has been, wholly within Anglicanism and with utter loyalty to the basic Anglican principles, the historic vocation of the so-called Anglo-Catholic movement.

In a rather illogical way the reformers would appear to have set a much higher value on auditory than on visual experience. Their stress was laid on sermons and interpretations of Scripture, and on the development of a new kind of church music suited for congregational use and appropriate to vernacular texts. It cannot be said that reformation music surpassed the old Latin plainsong at its best, but in the seventeenth century at least it came very near to equalling it, not only in the Anglican Church but also elsewhere (for example in Lutheranism). Mediaeval catholicism by contrast set a higher value on what educationists nowadays call ' visual aids ', and it is probably true that where illiterate or barely literate people are concerned visual aids are of the utmost importance.

Philosophically speaking there need be no controversy between visual and auditory experience. Both are equally sensual in their foundations and equally capable of spirituality when raised to the height of their potentialities. From the psychological point of view, however, there is rather more to be said, because it would appear that human beings may be roughly divided into primarily auditory and primarily visual types. I am not aware that anybody has ever gone into the question in detail, but at first sight it might seem that the great reformers were people of the primary auditory kind. Music was their favourite art; preaching and hearing sermons the form of devotion on which they laid their greatest emphasis. In protestant devotion the stress is usually upon the idea of *listening* to God, or *hearing* the voice of the Spirit. With this we may contrast one of the classic handbooks of Catholic Counter-Reformation devotion, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*, which are quite clearly intended to be used by people of a primarily visual type. Of course long before the Reformation we find saints and mystics who hear voices in the depths of their religious experience and others, no less holy, who see visions. The same pattern can be traced in the Old Testament prophets. Jeremiah is primarily an auditory type; Isaiah primarily a visual type. Many people of course combine both principles in different degrees, but there seems every reason to suppose that in crude numbers visual types vastly predominate over auditory types. Certainly the reformers would appear to have undervalued the visual elements both in worship and in religious communication. As a result the kind of recovery that has been going on in the Anglican Communion for the last hundred years or so has been very largely a recovery of that rich Catholic heritage of visual symbolism which is vitally important to so many people. But we must be careful not to recover the visual at the expense of the auditory. The Church requires both these approaches to reality, because it has to be the spiritual home of both the visual and the auditory types.

It would seem obvious, for example, that the Anglo-Catholic recovery of the great Holy Week services of the mediaeval Church is a pure spiritual gain which needs neither apology nor defence. The Palm Sunday ceremonies and the beautiful Communion of the Presanctified on Good Friday, preceded by the magnificent rites of Maundy Thursday, were surrendered out of negative

Reformation prejudice, and the recovery of these things in no way endangers any essential Reformation principle. On the contrary, once Anglicanism has completely recovered its right to use such splendid evangelical ceremonies as forms of worship, ways of witness and channels of teaching, it is not further from but in closer conformity with the essential principles of the Anglican Reformation. The same thing is true of the recovery of eucharistic vestments, which emphasise the difference between the evangelical Lord's Service given to us in the gospel and other seemly forms of worship designed, and indeed well designed, by men for the glory of God, and for this very reason taking place on a lower plane than the great act of worship designed by God for the salvation of men.

Of course, the maintenance of the essential Anglican position would be quite possible without the Anglo-Catholics, who have often been regarded as difficult and intransigent—chiefly because they have often been in fact difficult and intransigent. Nevertheless the signs are that without the Anglo-Catholic witness Anglicanism tends to degenerate into a rather complacent mediocrity, and too easily to assume that we have already obtained the Anglican vision. I would defend the position of the out-and-out evangelical Anglicans in precisely the same way. In my view the fulness of Anglicanism will be found at last not so much through the triumph of the centre as through the meeting and merging of the extremes. The fulness of Anglicanism will be utterly catholic and uncompromisingly evangelical at the same time. Once more, Anglicanism must grow out of compromise into synthesis if its destiny is to be fulfilled.

This distinction between the Anglican compromise and the Anglican synthesis has been referred to again and again in this chapter. Merely to seek a compromise between the two extremes is not only to steer a difficult course between their errors and excesses, it is also to miss and ignore the great values of the two extremes. And indeed mere compromise has characteristic defects and corruptions of its own. The real trouble about the *via media* is its chronic tendency towards complacency and mediocrity. In trying to steer a middle way between catholic and evangelical Christianity it may well miss the depths and treasures of both, and end up in an unlovely mood of smug superiority which the middle position, considered in itself, does nothing to

justify. Anglicans must not acquiesce in a situation in which they are *rather* Evangelical and *rather* Catholic, more Evangelical than the Catholics, but not so Evangelical as the Evangelicals, and more Catholic than the Evangelicals, but not so Catholic as the Catholics. Our aim in Anglicanism must be to become extreme Evangelicals and extreme Catholics at the same time. Only so can we hope to inherit, exemplify and republish the fulness of the gospel and the wholeness of the Christian life.

The critic of Anglicanism may very well ask the question, ' Is this what is really happening in Anglicanism? ' It does not always look very much like it. It must be confessed that there is a good deal of slipping and floundering, that large numbers of Anglicans still seem content enough to be merely ' Low Church ' or merely ' High Church ', existing in a state of unresolved tension with their fellow Anglicans. ' The vision tarries ', and sometimes we even forget what we are waiting for. On the other hand, and particularly since the Evangelical and Catholic revivals of the nineteenth century, there have been and still are leading Anglicans who have been led to interpret their Anglicanism more and more from this point of view. In particular we may mention the name of Frederick Denison Maurice, perhaps the first Anglican to see clearly where, under God, Anglicanism is really going. Now in the middle of the twentieth century he is more and more coming to be recognised as the greatest of all the Anglican theologians, indeed one of the greatest of all Christian theologians since the Reformation. In his own nineteenth century he was almost universally misunderstood, and was often written off by his contemporaries as a kind of broad or latitudinarian churchman. Certainly he was vividly aware of the needs of his own times, and magnificently responsive to those calls of God that come to Christian men through the events of their contemporary history. Though never a ' modernist ' in the twentieth-century sense, he was always a man out of whose faith came a veritable word of the Lord to his own generation, a prophetic as well as a theological figure. But for us his most important characteristic is not his relationship to the events of his own time but his more permanent relationship to Anglican history. As we look back upon his work we can see him as essentially a man at once utterly Evangelical and utterly Catholic, utterly Catholic because he was utterly Evangelical and utterly Evangelical because he was utterly Catholic. The

more we interpret the future of Anglicanism in terms of the promise that we can find in the writings of Maurice the more profoundly we shall understand what it is that the Holy Spirit would have us do and become. Nearer to our own time we may select the figure of William Temple, a man cast in the Maurician mould, a kind of God-intoxicated humanist, responsive to the guidance of God in almost every area of his complex, widely concerned life. In his life and writings also we can find a clue to the nature and future of the Anglican profession. In such men Anglicanism ceases to be a mediocre and complacent middle way. Rather it becomes a total way, not steering between, but rather drawing together and uniting, the positive values of what we may call the Christian extremes.

It would seem to me that as Anglicanism develops we must become more and more intolerant of the Catholic who is not an evangelical and of the evangelical who is not a Catholic. Such men do not really illustrate either the breadth or the depth of the Anglican synthesis. On the other hand, the Anglican who is neither Catholic nor Evangelical, but exists in a kind of middle which ought for our souls' health to be vigorously excluded, is even further from the Anglican vision. Maurice detested the ecclesiastical parties, but above all he repudiated the idea of a ' no party party '. The ' no party party ' is indeed the worst of all the parties. It is the product of a kind of ecclesiastical arianism, for which, just as for the original Arians the Christ was neither human nor divine but something in between, so the Church is neither Catholic nor Evangelical but an unnameable mediocrity which combines a few of the characteristics of both but misses the fulness of either. The hope of Anglicanism lies in the union and fusion of the out and out Evangelicals and the out and out Anglo-catholics, not in some kind of future triumph of the central churchmen, which, and I say this most piously and charitably, may God Himself forbid!

6

ANGLICANISM AS AN ECUMENICAL MOVEMENT

THE previous chapter at least makes one thing plain; Anglicanism is, and has been from the beginning, what we nowadays call an ecumenical movement. For this very reason it cannot conceivably deny its sympathy and support to the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century.

The ecumenical movement is one of several signs on the contemporary scene that what historians have long called ' the modern period ' of Western history—beginning roughly with the Renaissance, and conventionally and rather pointlessly dated from the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453—is now drawing to its close. The characteristic institutions of that period have been three: the rise and flourishing of the sovereign nation state; a sensate or representational art, recalling somewhat that of ancient Greece in its classical period; and a chronic condition of religious schism perpetuating itself almost without question in most areas of Western Christendom. There are many signs in the history of the mid-twentieth century that these things are now in a state of rapid decline, and will probably pass away altogether within the next hundred years or so. After all they are no more than phases of world history and it would be unreasonable to expect them to last for ever.

The nation state is more and more obviously ceasing to be a viable economic and military concept. Under modern conditions nation states can neither feed themselves and maintain their prosperity, nor defend their frontiers, so long as they remain in their former isolation. This was always true of small nations but nowadays it is becoming more and more obviously true of even the greater powers. Nationalist feeling, certainly, still persists, for great emotions have an odd way of surviving the conditions which once called them forth and in which they had some relevance. Nevertheless modern nationalism in Western Civilisation

has changed its nature. It is now conducting a last desperate defence of outmoded institutions and loyalties; no longer is it busy creating new ones. (In Africa and Asia nationalism is still in its early creative phase, but here also the unfavourable world conditions should suffice to bring it rapidly to an end, once its somewhat destructive and divisive appetites have been satisfied.)

The changes in the artistic climate are, if anything, even more marked. In music, painting and poetry the movement is steadily away from sensate and representational aesthetic ideals to something more formal, intellectual and symbolic. The Christian mind must welcome this change, for classical Christian art was never representational and modern art even at its most 'outrageous' is much more akin to the great forms of Christian art—Byzantine mosaics, mediaeval stained glass, sacramental liturgy and plainsong—than like the art of the last four hundred years or so. Christian art also is symbolic in its character. It means rather than merely represents what it says. Perhaps the last kick of sensate representational art is in the grim realism so popular in American fiction and drama, which, if it does not strive faithfully to represent the beautiful, at least concentrates on a realistic representation of the ugly and sordid. It is probably safe to prophesy that this rather degenerate variety, sensational rather than sensate, will also rapidly pass away.

Certainly it is true that large numbers of people still hanker after the old sensate art, which indeed gave us many unforgettable works of genius. But this may well be one more example of the way in which great historical emotions unseasonably survive at least for a time their historical occasions. The popularity and vogue of what is sometimes called 'contemporary art' is slowly growing. In the past it has had its martyrs and heroes, but they have won for their aesthetic ideals a future which will not soon be taken away from them.

The withering of our chronic religious discords, the decay of any deep and widespread belief in the elements of our institutional chaos, the questioning of the concept of the Church degenerated into a motley crowd of churches, is represented by the ecumenical movement. Utterly contrary to Holy Scripture as they have been from the beginning, we must not say that the great post-Reformation schisms of Western Christendom, under the providence of our Lord the Holy Spirit, performed no useful function at all.

In an age of increasing nationalist intoxication the divisions of Christendom to some extent preserved it from degenerating into a group of national churches which could conveniently be turned into the mere tools of the nationalist spirit. Religious schism at least healthily divided otherwise unwholesomely united nations. Even to this day the persistence of nationalist feeling renders it undesirable, in my view, to push on too far or too swiftly with schemes for reunion on the merely national level. It is more important that all the churches in our present divided Christendom should establish strong and binding ties with highly like-minded churches in other countries than that they should unite with less like-minded churches in their own country. It is in the long run more important that Christian institutions should be visibly internationalist and cosmopolitan than that they should strive to integrate themselves into strong, unified national churches. The unified national church may well be perversely hitching the wagon of Christ to a falling star. The great sovereign nations of the world represent little systems which have had their day and will shortly cease to be. The proper slogan of the ecumenical spirit should not be ' One Church for each nation ' but ' One Church for one world '.

Of course it is again true that many untimely emotions, left over from the declining period of ' modern ' history, still survive to militate against this idea, but time will more and more surely show itself to be on the side of those who do not experience these emotions very deeply, are not actuated by them, and do not seek to perpetuate them. In passing we may say that this is perhaps and always has been the profoundest cause of misgiving about the South Indian reunion scheme, of which I shall say a little more later on. We may well ask whether it is really desirable to create a unified national church in a country which is passing through a period of heated national emotion. We might equally well ask, however, whether in such a country it was ever possible successfully to resist such proposals once it had become plain that they were in fact practicable. In other words, the opposition to the South India scheme gravely erred by indulging in theological rather than prophetic criticism, and by failing to ask itself whether in fact, under the existing conditions in South India, there was any real possibility of successfully resisting demands and aspirations motivated by such profound secular causes. In this controversy

prophetic warning might perhaps have served more usefully than merely theological criticism, however judicious.

But if some dangers of this kind may be suspected in purely national ecumenical bodies, such as the British Council of Churches or the American Council of Churches, at least they are not to be found in the World Council of Churches itself, and it is the World Council of Churches that truly represents all that is best in the ecumenical movement.

The suspicion of the World Council of Churches and the ecumenical movement in some quarters is perhaps a survival of that period when it was understandably regarded as the product of those movements in theology which are variously called 'liberal' and 'modernist'. That period, it is safe to say, if it ever existed has now happily passed away. Indeed the liberal or modernist period in theology itself has rapidly declined and almost entirely disappeared as a living force in Christian thought. Many of its one-time stalwarts still survive in the physical sense, but all that is most vital in contemporary Christian thought has left them far behind. It is safe to say that that particular kind of error will not soon recur again, not at all events in any kindred form. If it is true that at one time many leaders of the ecumenical movement sought the goal of reunion through what we may describe as theological frivolity, it is even more overwhelmingly and obviously true that in our day men are seeking it through the more proper channel of theological seriousness. The liberal movement, with its all-pervading insipidity and superficiality, is over, and genuine Christianity no longer has anything to fear from that quarter. Nowadays indeed perhaps the proper questions to ask ourselves are these: 'What positive values did the liberal movement clumsily represent?' and 'What elements—for there are such elements—should we seek to preserve out of the wreck of the liberal theology?' But these are not questions which we can endeavour to answer here.

The basic aim of any ecumenical movement worthy of the name —and I believe that the present ecumenical movement is increasingly worthy of the name—is the visible restoration of the unity and continuity of Christendom, not merely the restoration of mutual charity and understanding between the separated parts of Christendom—that perhaps should not have been necessary, although we must penitently confess that it was; nor merely the

creation of channels of co-operation and neighbourly relations between separated churches—though in many areas that in itself may be no bad thing; nor even the achievement of some kind of federal and fraternal organisation comprehending the separated churches—for a federation of separated churches is remote indeed from the ' One Church, one Faith, one Lord ' of Holy Scripture. Indeed this last possibility, a federation of separated churches, must easily become an actual hindrance to the cause of reunion, precisely because so many people might easily relapse into mistaking it for the substance of reunion itself. In particular we must stress the danger of any project for a mere banding together of non-Roman Catholic Churches into some kind of pan-protestant federation. A project for the reunion of Christendom which excludes the largest of all the separated Christian churches could only result in a travesty of reunion. It might be said that this particular church has already excluded itself, but the World Council of Churches has undoubtedly been right not to retaliate by excluding it. Sooner or later I believe, and in the light of the brief historical analysis which I have already outlined, Rome will enter into the councils of disintegrated but now actively self-reintegrating Christendom. Even the Church of Rome cannot indefinitely resist the power of the Holy Spirit combined with, and indeed dominating, the pressures of contemporary history.

The Role of Anglicanism in the Ecumenical strategy

Perhaps the greatest danger in the ecumenical movement is the sentimentalism of so many Christians, which will so easily direct its enthusiasms into forms of ecumenical activity that fall well below the level of the ecumenical vision. The spectacle of separated churches actively co-operating, in relation perhaps to some secular cause, or exchanging preachers on chance festal occasions, or indulging in some kind of inter-communion service, too readily convinces so many people that reunion itself is already manifested in such phenomena, or is being actively forwarded by sporadic outbursts of this kind. On the contrary I am convinced that such manifestations do very little good, perhaps no good at all. It is a far cry from occasional flirtation to real marriage, and there is something to be said for the view that the habit of flirtation, once it becomes chronic, ultimately unfits a man for real marriage.

Certainly the eucharist ought not to be used, as so many enthusiasts sometimes seem to propose, as a means towards reunion, or as a way of anticipating a reunion which has not yet been achieved. The eucharist is not a means to any end whatsoever, not even to the noblest purposes which we may entertain. Perhaps indeed the pain of not being able to communicate with our fellow-Christians at the altar of God is a spiritual agony which we ought to bear so long as we continue to be divided from them. The fact is that nothing exposes the scandal of our divisions more vividly or fills us with a deeper sense of the immense task which lies before us than our present inability to join in the eucharist with so many of our fellow Christians. Of all the stimuli which should persuade us to gird ourselves for the battle this is incomparably the most potent, and we should be very ill-advised indeed to set it aside so long as the battle itself has still to be fought and won. Our very zeal for reunion should make us deaf to all sentimental clamourings for immediate inter-communion. Let us face the stark facts and strive to abolish them, without misguidedly endeavouring to cover up the evil and sinfulness of our present situation with a mere show of reunion.

The surviving and extant schisms of Christendom may be divided into two groups: the great schism between East and West dating from the eleventh century, although having its origins, of course, at a considerably earlier period; and the complex state of schism in Western Christendom deriving from the Reformation and becoming steadily more intricate throughout the major portion of the post-Reformation period. I believe the ecumenical movement will be wise if it attempts to deal with these very different types of schism in reverse order, tackling the more recent forms of the disease first and reserving the great schisms of East and West to a later period. The western schisms are incomparably the more intricate, comprehending as they do the divisions between various churches which are frankly Protestant, the profounder gulf between protestantism and Rome, and the separation of both protestantism and Rome from the Anglican communion.

The Anglican communion has often been called the bridge church, and such indeed in some sense it is, but it is important to remember that a bridge is only a bridge between two places. Thus the Henry Hudson Bridge in New York may be essential to my purpose if I desire to pass from Manhattan into Westchester

but quite useless to me if I wish to go from Manhattan to Brooklyn. The Anglican communion is a bridge church only at one particular point in the developing ecumenical strategy of the Holy Spirit, and that particular point has not yet been reached. If, for example, a rapprochement should be projected at some future date between the Presbyterians and the Lutherans, Anglicanism is certainly not a bridge so far as they would be concerned, and it could do little more than wish them God-speed and commend them to His mercy. The Anglican communion can only manifestly be seen to be a bridge at the point at which it is visibly a bridge which men want to cross. We shall have reached that point only when at long last world protestantism and the Roman Church really desire mutual understanding and charity-laden contact with each other.

It is at this point that the central thesis of Anglicanism becomes ecumenically relevant. Catholicism and the Reformation protest are theologically compatible; more than that indeed, each logically necessitates the other. This thesis Anglicanism has maintained not merely in theory; at its best it has sought to illustrate and exemplify it in practice, and with increasing clarity and success as generation has succeeded generation. It is this central Anglican thesis which is absolutely essential to the bridging of the great divide which has been the occasion of the deepest of all the western schisms. It is obvious that western Christendom cannot be united on the basis of either intransigent Protestantism or intransigent Romanism. Indeed each of these two extremes is the Holy Spirit's answer to the other, and each, so long as Christendom remains divided, is essential to its balance. It is useless for either to hope for total victory. Each must learn to contemplate the other, not only with charity but also with humility, and with willingness to learn, and then both will find the glory of their own traditions in the power and importance of what each can learn from the other. This moment will see the fulfilment of Anglicanism on a world-wide scale, and will justify our long period of enforced isolation. The Anglican destiny is to house and husband the great treasure until the world wants it, to preserve the great secret till the world can understand it.

This is not in the least an intransigent Anglicanism similar in kind to either intransigent protestantism or intransigent Romanism. I am not suggesting that Christendom, in order to be

reunited, must necessarily become Anglican. But it must learn from Anglicanism what Anglicanism has to teach. From one point of view the existence and development of Anglicanism looks very like a historical accident, a ' sport ' or curiosity which is the product of unique and unrepeatable historical circumstances, like the Incarnation itself. But it is above all when we have to deal with what look like mere historical accidents that we are most obviously compelled to use the category of Divine Providence. One is reminded of the story of the teacher who, after a short absence from the class-room, found a very rude drawing of herself on the blackboard. She at once demanded that the culprit should stand up, and threatened to punish the entire class if he failed to do so. However, the perpetrator of the cartoon stubbornly refused to reveal himself, and so she sentenced the entire class to a corporate detention. At this point one hopeful boy attempted to improvise a theological alibi. ' Please, teacher ', he said in a faltering voice, ' no one done it—God done it.' There is indeed a profound connection between the historical observation—' no one done it '—and the theological interpretation—' God done it.' Anglicanism as we now see it is a far more subtle and profound contribution to Christian history than any sixteenth-century worthy could conceivably have foreseen, or have willed even if he had foreseen it. Anglicanism has existed from the beginning and has slowly become what it has become under the Lordship of Divine Providence, preparing it for just such a historical occasion as that which the next century or so will most certainly bring forth. I am not in the least suggesting that all Christians should become Anglicans, but what I am suggesting is that all Christians will do well to try to grasp the meaning and purpose of the Holy Spirit in bringing forth, preserving and developing Anglicanism.

Nor am I implying that for the present Anglicanism has no contribution to make to the ecumenical movement. I do, however, believe that the primary task of Anglicanism at this moment is to concentrate on deepening its response to its own central thesis and dominating vision. We have to move, as I explained in the previous chapter, from merely being what we are *in Anglicanism* to becoming complete Anglicans in the sense of realising the fulness and integrity of Anglicanism in our own spiritual and intellectual lives. The disparity between the breadth and stature of Anglicanism itself and the personal breadth and

stature of most Anglicans is far too great. We fall persistently short of the glory of the Anglican tradition, and it is still true that far too many Anglicans look upon their fellow Anglicans of other ' schools of thought ' or ecclesiastical parties as disloyal Anglicans with whom Anglicanism can well dispense. There are still far too many churchmen who describe themselves as evangelicals, for example, who take this grossly un-Anglican view of the Anglo-Catholics. A truly Anglican evangelical, however, should be delighted by the fact that the Anglo-Catholics stand where they do in Anglicanism, and should candidly acknowledge that Anglicanism could not have become what it now is without them. The only kind of evangelical for whom Anglicanism has no use is the evangelical who thinks that the Anglo-Catholics ought to be suppressed—primarily because he has no use for Anglicanism. Similarly the only kind of Anglo-Catholic with whom the Anglican communion could very well dispense—precisely because he would like to dispense with the Anglican communion—is the kind of Anglo-Catholic who would like to eliminate the evangelicals.

On the whole this is pretty well understood throughout the Anglican communion but here and there we come across the so-called ' monochrome ' dioceses, little centres of intolerant power which lamentably fail to make manifest either the outward Anglican balance or the inward Anglican genius. Most of them are evangelical but a few are Anglo-Catholic; in either case they merely subsist in Anglicanism and their essential spirit is not really Anglican at all. They flourish within the Anglican structure but seem to have no grasp of the essential Anglican idea. Worse still perhaps are those areas of Anglicanism which can hardly even be called monochrome, because they appear to impose a uniformly colourless ' central churchmanship ' lacking in both the glory and the passion of either extreme, and they present Anglicanism, in consequence, in its most unattractive and least relevant form. I have already insisted that central churchmanship provides no real solution of the Anglican problem. What Anglicanism needs and must have in order to fulfil itself is definite evangelicals who are also Anglo-Catholics, and thorough-going Anglo-Catholics who are also out-and-out evangelicals. Only in this way can we really become and be Anglicans in the fullest sense of the word.

Reunion begins at home and there is still very much to be done. For the moment the essential Anglican rule, upon which we must

all insist with equal emphasis, is that nothing should be done by one party or group of Anglicans which would make the position within Anglicanism of any other party untenable. This applies equally both to those evangelicals who are so enthusiastic about the ecumenical movement as to contemplate compromising our catholicity and its interests, and to those Anglo-Catholics whose conception of catholicity is so rigid and mistaken as to exclude the evangelical impulse. Neither side must do anything which will make the other's position impossible. I fully realise that this basic rule of the Anglican game—if I may be pardoned for using such a phrase—will be found rather frustrating by many people, but in the present position of Anglicanism it is perhaps still essential that many Anglicans should feel somewhat frustrated, although a better way of describing their experience would be to say that they are under, and must accept, the discipline of Anglican history.

But this insistence that for us reunion begins at home, and that here in our Anglican home much still remains to be done, does not mean that Anglicanism has no message for and cannot work with the ecumenical movement.

The Anglican contribution to the Ecumenical Movement

Of the chief contribution of the Anglican communion to the ecumenical movement—Anglicanism itself, the results of its own experiment and the fruits of its own experience—I have already spoken. But there would seem to be at least two other important contributions which Anglican participants in ecumenical discussions are able to make, perhaps more clearly and from a more advantageous position than most of their colleagues in the movement.

(*a*) A doctrine of the Church that really sanctions the ecumenical movement. The ecumenical movement inevitably presupposes a doctrine of the Church which strongly supports and clearly articulates its basic intuition and premiss that the present disordered state of Christendom is an outrageous scandal clean contrary to the will of God revealed in Holy Scripture. Yet we find to our surprise that many supporters of the ecumenical movement are extremely reluctant to commit themselves consciously and explicitly to the kind of doctrine of the Church which their commendable zeal presupposes. Indeed the attitude of the ecumenical

enthusiast to the divisions which he desires to bring to an end is often ambiguous, not to say schizophrenic. On the one hand they are sinful and must be brought to an end with all possible speed, but on the other hand it would appear that they have borne great spiritual fruit and must not be condemned. Too often even in ecumenical circles reformationism, a deep sense of all that was valid in the Reformation protest, is allowed to degenerate into an ideology which bolsters up and sanctions the characteristic Reformation institutions. Thus what, from the Anglican point of view, must seem to be the obvious fact that the ecumenical movement presupposes something at all events very like the Catholic doctrine of the Church is frequently obscured almost to the point of being lost to sight altogether.

A particularly dangerous red-herring is the widespread notion that all the various church traditions embody some unique insight of their own into the nature of the Church, so that the ecumenical purpose can best be served by putting all these insights together. Thus it will be said that Congregationalism is a way of insisting on the rights of the laity within the church, and that Presbyterianism lays a proper stress on the corporate character of the ministry and on the constitutional or canonical functioning of the episcopate. No doubt we shall be wise to embody both these principles into the polity of the Catholic Church wherever possible, even though it is better to avoid any suggestion that any of us possess any inherent rights in the Church of God. On the other hand a catholicism fully aware of itself does not need either Congregationalism or Presbyterianism to remind it of these facts. In catholic doctrine the whole Church is a priestly body, and that means that the so-called laity have a sacerdotal character just as truly as the ordained minister. It is also the case that the proper place of the bishop from the earliest time has been in the midst of his concurring presbyters and deacons. All that is true and valid in these positions was well known, however much it may have been ignored, long before either Congregational or Presbyterian systems arose. The fact that such systems have arisen may help to remind us of forgotten, or too long neglected, elements of Catholic order, but the systems themselves have no essential function to play.

In fact the attempt to bring about reunion on a kind of ' Alice in Wonderland ' basis—' all have won and all shall have prizes '—is

a serious hindrance to the work of reunion. Reunion requires penitence, not a deliberate policy of systematically pandering to the complacencies of a divided Christendom. This truth applies as much to the Anglican as to anybody else. I have already suggested that the gravest weakness of moderate or central Anglicanism is its very unlovely satisfaction with Anglicanism as it now is. The great advantage conferred by the presence in Anglicanism of its Anglo-Catholic and evangelical extremes is to be found precisely in the fact that both parties are rightly critical of Anglicanism as it now is. In the present divided state of Christendom the more self-critical we become the nearer shall we be to reunion.

But we cannot become truly self-critical in this matter without some objective criterion in the light of which we can plainly see that we have all fallen woefully short. In this context the essential objective criterion is that catholic and biblical doctrine of the Church which I have tried to unfold in this book. In the light of that doctrine we must all admit that we have all grievously sinned and fallen far short of the glory of God's Church. Even Anglicanism, whose historic experience seems to me so supremely significant in this matter, is important chiefly because of what it promises to become rather than because of what it is or has been. In a sense Anglicans have fallen even further short of the vision than anyone else, for they at least have had the promise and the vision explicitly and lucidly in their midst, and yet have so persistently failed to comprehend and embody it. The petty party struggles and intolerances within Anglicanism are indeed the most disgraceful element in its history, and Anglicans must bring them speedily to an end if they are to face the challenge of the ecumenical movement wholeheartedly and without shame.

It must be said at once, and with great gratitude to God, that nowadays there is a marked revival of a new sense of the theology of the Church throughout almost all Christendom. Nevertheless even here the historic struggle against catholicism in its Romanist form still militates against the full recovery of the whole tradition. It is perhaps particularly important to rescue the terms ' catholic ' and ' catholicism ' from their most unfortunate identification with Romanism by so many people. It is horrifying to hear Christians using the word ' catholic ' when they really mean ' Roman '. Of course, it is true that the Roman Church is a part of the Catholic

Church, and that Romanists do maintain in their own highly characteristic way and language the whole catholic faith, but they mix it unfortunately with so many unauthorised additions of their own—additions which at times threaten the integrity of the catholic faith—that where they are concerned we should always hesitate to use the word 'catholic' without a qualifying prefix. If the catholic faith is maintained by the Romanists it certainly cannot be said that they maintain it in its purity. It is all there, but so many other things are there too that it is not always easy to recognise it. Certainly a characteristically Roman belief or practice cannot be called catholic merely because it is Roman. Where our Romanist friends are concerned we must always be very careful to distinguish what is genuinely catholic in their inheritance and point of view from what is merely Roman. Properly speaking the latter element cannot be described as catholic at all. The idea of using what is characteristically Roman as the measure and criterion of what is genuinely catholic is a Romanist abuse which non-Roman Catholic Christians ought not to accept so easily as they do. It is not only possible to accept and proclaim the catholic faith in its integrity apart from the Roman *magisterium*, this is also very much the easiest and best way of doing it. Of course we must admit, and again very thankfully, that many of the best contemporary Roman theologians in fact put all their concentration and emphasis on the catholic elements in their inheritance while quietly allowing the purely Romanist elements to fall into the background. In the Roman as in the protestant world a great work of recovery is going on, and these things should fill us with hope.

Nevertheless at the moment the main burden rests upon the Anglicans in the ecumenical movement. It is above all their task to say again and again that the ecumenical movement, with its characteristic hopes and enthusiasms, really presupposes the catholic doctrine of the Church. We can do much with sympathy and understanding to assist our protestant brethren to recover and to recognise this great truth.

(*b*) Just as the great contemporary movement of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Church is the liturgical movement, with its emphasis on a great return to the point of view and way of worship characteristic of the early Church fathers, so the great movement in the protestant world is the movement back to the reformers. No

doubt there are dangers here, for we sometimes find something like a most uncalled-for apotheosis of the Reformers—certainly they did not call for it—in many of our protestant friends. Nevertheless after the long period during which protestant thought was so greatly influenced first by Kant and then by Hegel and nineteenth-century idealism, and finally almost completely obliterated by the theological liberals, this return to the reformers, with their profound grasp of essential Christianity, is one of the most welcome signs of the times. For protestants to return to the reformers is to return to the point at which protestantism is closest to the catholic faith, and therefore closest to all their non-protestant fellow Christians. Of course it is true that none of the great reformers physically participated in Anglican history. They had a considerable influence on many of those who did play an important part in the development of Anglicanism, but they are not themselves characters in the Anglican drama. Many European protestants find this a little difficult to understand. Thus I was once asked by a Lutheran professor whether Anglican ministerial students read ' their Luther ' in the original German or in translation. I had to explain as tactfully as possible that most Anglican students do not read Luther at all, primarily because it would never occur to them that he is in any sense ' theirs '. On the whole I am very glad that the Anglican tradition includes no great ' Mr. Anglican ' to whom we refer on every possible occasion. Hooker is perhaps the nearest approach to such an institution that we possess, but important as his position is in Anglican history it does not approach the role of Calvin in Calvinism or Luther in Lutheranism. Our appeal has always been primarily to Scripture as received and interpreted by the fathers of the early Church, and that incidentally was the main appeal of the great reformers themselves.

Nevertheless, although we Anglicans cannot, if we are true to ourselves, participate wholeheartedly in any ' back to the reformers ' movement, we must fully realise that so far as our protestant brethren are concerned it is a very healthy sign indeed and one which we, as sympathetic friends, should do everything in our power to encourage. The so-called ' neo-orthodoxy ' of contemporary protestant theology is not in my view particularly relevant to Anglican problems and perplexities and it can only make a very limited contribution to the development of Anglican

thought. The orthodoxy to which its devotees return falls in many respects far short of catholic orthodoxy as the Anglican tradition understands Catholicism, but it at least provides a point of view to which and with which the Anglican tradition can speak in mutually intelligible terms.

One thing at least it can teach us of the greatest importance—the centrality and primacy of Holy Scripture. We live in a day in which the catholic faith should be preached and proclaimed as perhaps never before, but in order to meet the needs of our times the important thing is that we should preach and proclaim it as a biblical faith and in biblical terms. It is particularly noteworthy that at the present time the Roman Catholic contribution to biblical theology is rapidly rising both in quantity and in quality. In this welcome movement we Anglicans must not be behindhand. Everywhere in Christendom Holy Scripture is coming into its own at long last, and more and more it is true that theological propositions which cannot be expounded and defended in biblical terms have less and less hold on the contemporary Christian mind. This transformation is perhaps the most hopeful sign of all. Despite the extent of our differences it is more and more obviously true that today we are turning increasingly to the same court of appeal, and that this is the general tendency of almost all historic Christendom. Here at least we Anglicans can go wholeheartedly with the times, and in fullest sympathy and collaboration with Christians in other parts of our divided Christendom. Thus we might well claim that our second great contribution to ecumenical discussion is to be found in the idea of biblical catholicism.

(*c*) So long as the Church of Rome refuses to participate in the ecumenical movement it will continue in my view to be part of the Anglican task sympathetically to expound not only its own point of view but also that of the Roman Church. I have again and again been horrified by the perverse way in which so many protestant contributors to ecumenical discussion insist upon interpreting protestantism always in terms of protestantism at its best and Romanism in terms of Romanism at its worst. Of course, if first-class Roman Catholic thinkers were allowed to be present at ecumenical discussions such a state of affairs would be impossible. Again and again they would intervene to correct ludicrous caricatures of their own position. However they are not for the most part allowed to be present, and we might very well say that if their

whole case goes by default they have only themselves to blame. Nevertheless it is very important for the perspective and balance of the ecumenical movement that their case should not be allowed to go by default, and this probably means in practice that Anglican participants in such discussion must constantly intervene, so to speak, on their behalf, explaining their point of view more charitably and accurately, and consistently indicating the core of validity that underlies so many of the Romanist perversions. Rome has tried to keep herself out of the ecumenical picture, but it is essential to the faithfulness and integrity of that picture that we should not allow her to be kept out. Certainly the anti-Roman prejudice runs very deep in non-Roman Catholic Christendom, but however much it is historically justified, and indeed rendered almost inevitable by the events of past history, it is at best an unecumenical emotion and one of which we must persistently strive to rid ourselves in our prayers before God and in our speech before men.

Anglicanism and the Reunion Schemes

There is much to be said for the view that all positive reunion schemes are for the moment premature. For some time to come the primary tasks of the ecumenical movement must be to organise the sympathetic and friendly meeting of representative minds in our divided Christendom, to spread throughout the length and breadth of all the various Christian communions a real desire for reunion, a genuine understanding of the magnitude of the problems involved, and to inculcate the habit of sincere prayer for the reunion throughout the length and breadth of Christendom. Even so, considerable time must elapse before Christendom will be ready to embark in a congenial atmosphere upon positive reunion schemes. The foundations of reunion must be deeply dug in the spiritual lives of Christians, and the separated traditions must be given a proper period of time in which to exercise their influence upon each other, before the hour strikes at which a reunited Christendom can be positively attempted. To some impatient souls this may seem rather a hard saying, but we have endured separation for a very long time, and we cannot be surprised if we find that deep mutual understanding cannot be reestablished at once merely because we have now come to desire it with renewed passion. In some ways the task seemed a little

easier, if much less essential, during the period of the liberal theology. It was then supposed if only we were all equally estranged from the various Christian traditions to which we belong, we should none of us care sufficiently about them to allow them to divide us any longer. Why, it might be asked, should we be divided by considerations to which we have ceased to attach any profound value? With the demise of the liberal theology, however, the quest for reunion, although much more urgently necessary, becomes much more difficult, because in proportion as the superficiality of liberalism declines our attachment to and feeling of gratitude towards the various Christian traditions in and through which we have received the gospel becomes correspondingly greater, and it is more difficult to push beyond them into that universal Christianity to which they all bear their witness.

In the present situation the various practical schemes which are so persistently put forward by enthusiasts are too much the work of ecclesiastical diplomacy and bargaining, too apt to short-circuit profound theological issues, too little disciplined by the deep necessities of Christian theological and spiritual integrity. It is my belief that if the progressively greater meeting of minds and growth of mutual sympathy which is characteristic of the ecumenical movement at its best can be carried along with its present momentum for another century or so then something really wonderful may happen, although we ourselves will not live to see it, something much more wonderful than our present reunion schemes, with their prosy paper constitutions and their diplomatically conceived safeguards and concessions. At the moment the letter of the positive reunion schemes killeth; it is the Holy Spirit Himself who gives the ecumenical movement life. Christians seem never so divided as when they meet to discuss reunion as an immediately practical project. It is not so much that their divisions prevent them from formulating a scheme, rather it is the formulated scheme itself that signalises, and would perpetuate, the extent of their divisions.

Perhaps the most important of these formulated schemes is that which underlies the well-known South India Reunion, which has brought so much controversy into the Anglican Communion. I feel confident that the Holy Spirit actively prompted both the enthusiasm for the scheme found in some quarters and the legitimate hesitations, doubts and scruples found in others. Probably

the South India scheme was about as good a scheme as Christendom is capable of producing at the present moment. It is certain, however, that it was nothing like good enough, and it is most undesirable that it should be taken as a model in any future negotiations. Indeed, as I have already suggested, it is probably undesirable that any schemes whatsoever should in the future be conducted on a merely local and national basis. For myself, I was one of those who was very hesitant and reluctant about the scheme, and I would still urge that Anglicanism as a whole should not commit itself to it too uncritically. However, this at least must be said, it was one thing to urge that it was premature for Anglicanism in South India to enter the scheme in the first place, and it is quite another thing to decide upon the proper attitude to the South Indian United Church now that it has come into being, for now we have to do with the irreversibilities of concrete history. So long as it was no more than a project, it was possible to concentrate on the necessary and legitimate criticisms. Now, however, that it is a reality it must not only be criticised, it must also be loved. The deepest prayer and profoundest wish of those Anglicans who felt, and no doubt still feel, the gravest anxiety and trepidation about the whole event must be that history will prove them to have been wrong. Indeed the more steadfastly they can maintain this Christian attitude the more likely it is that history will prove them to have been wrong. Already, from all that one can gather, the situation is full of hope. The Reformation forms no part of India's history, and intransigent reformationism of the kind which Anglicans must always deplore is not likely to be very deeply rooted in an indigenous Indian Church. The gravest dangers confronting this Church, as I have already suggested, are threatened not by intransigent reformationism but by Indian nationalism. But we shall best help South Indian Christians to overcome this particular menace by maintaining the fullest possible co-operation and fraternity with them.

Reunion and Ideology

But perhaps the greatest of all the present dangers to the ecumenical movement is the indiscriminating character of so much of the enthusiasm which it succeeds in arousing. Obviously reunion and the quest for reunion must be numbered among the most important items on the agenda of contemporary Christen-

dom. Nevertheless, it is wrong, perhaps even idolatrous, to place it right at the top of that agenda. Scandalous and frustrating as our present divisions are, there are yet worse things; imperative though the quest for reunion may be, there are yet even higher and more essential Christian objectives. Even reunion must be subordinated to the integrity of the gospel and the catholic faith, to the simple but essential virtue of intellectual honesty. One of the worst products of the ecumenical enthusiasm is the contemporary output, far too large for our intellectual health, of what might be called ideological theologies, cloudy and indecisive theological formulations devised for the express purpose of facilitating the aims of the ecumenical movement. One example of this kind of thinking we have already briefly considered—the argument that episcopacy is of the *bene* or *plene esse* of the Church but not of its *esse*. The kind of motivation that lies behind special pleadings of this sort is obvious, and it robs such clearly artificial formulations of any real intellectual appeal and authority. If the ecumenical movement is in the long run to succeed, and the corporate reunion of Christendom is at last consummated, it will not require any special ecumenical theology to supply its intellectual basis. The sole basis of reunion is the eternally valid biblical and catholic doctrine of the Church. The ecumenical movement must put its trust in the perennial truths of Christendom, and in their biblical source, and not in hastily extemporised, *ad hoc* theologies whose sole purpose is not so much to apprehend truth as to facilitate action.

Honest men will always prefer truth to any formula which has little to recommend it apart from practical convenience in the immediate situation; and they will always prefer a rigorously scientific and logical method of seeking and stating truth, of apprehending it as clearly and distinctly as circumstances permit, to any kind of romantic approach which proceeds by enveloping straightforward differences of opinion in a kind of anti-intellectual fog. One of the primary characteristics of the great classical theologians, whether Catholic like Aquinas or Reformed like Calvin, is their directness and lucidity. Of course we realise that their subject matters and themes are so profound in depth and so infinitely broad in content that much of the whole reality inevitably escapes and transcends the clear-cut formulations of such theologians. Nevertheless we do not get closer to the heart of the

reality simply by throwing clarity overboard and taking refuge in intellectual haziness and imprecision. Precise formulae which fall short of the reality are always preferable to vague professions which do not even approach it. Intellectual vagueness is not the proper counterpart of infinite truth, and they are greatly mistaken who suppose that, because the truth with which we have to do in Christianity is infinite in extent and bottomless in depth, it is therefore better apprehended by vague and unmethodical thinking than by bold and clear cut logic. Clear thinking which knows itself to be transcended by the reality with which it deals is always preferable in theology, as in all science, to fuzzy and ineffective thought which may be tempted to mistake its lack of clear cut outlines for a genuine apprehension of the infinite. However reunion may come, and upon whatever it may be based, it certainly cannot be founded upon romantic, cloudy and imprecise theologising.

Perhaps, as I have already suggested, the cause of most of the trouble is the strong feeling of so many in contemporary Christendom that for the moment reunion is the most important of all Christian purposes. I feel that I have stressed the importance of reunion in this chapter so strongly that I may reasonably hope that I shall not be misunderstood by the reader when I roundly deny that this is so. Even in the present unhappy and sinful condition of divided Christendom, reunion is less important than the carrying on of Christian worship in all its depth and fulness, less important than evangelism, less important than the Church's fulfilment of its pastoral task, profoundly interpreted and understood, less important than the purity and completeness of the gospel and the integrity of the catholic faith. We must put reunion in its proper place and see it in its proper perspective. Otherwise our enthusiasm for the ecumenical movement will become and appear to be more of a pathological obsession than a rational Christian conviction, a mood which confounds and overthrows rather than consummates our Christian integrity.

Need for Spirit of Realism

The main contentions of this chapter can be summed up very briefly. The ecumenical movement is an accomplished fact and the historical omens are, to say the least, propitious. Anglicanism is in itself a kind of ecumenical movement, and it cannot possibly

deny the world-wide ecumenical movement its sympathy and support. Like every other human project the ecumenical cause is in some danger of being embarrassed and hindered by the hotheads and enthusiasts among its own followers. It is indeed a movement of the Spirit, but it is also a human and historical movement, bearing upon it the marks of human fallibility and sin. It needs our criticism as well as our love, our legitimate theological scruples and hesitations as much as our loyalty. There is certainly no reason why the Anglican should withdraw himself from it in any way, but there is every reason for the Anglican to keep his head in the midst of its intoxicating enthusiasms. The situation is hopeful and we have every reason for a little indulging our hopes, but a proper spirit of realism is still necessary if our hopes are to be continually humbled and chastened. In particular I would suggest that we should resist the many rash proposals that we should proceed with the design and erection of ambitious superstructures while so many of the necessary foundations are still unlaid.

7

ANGLICANISM AS A LITURGICAL MOVEMENT:

LOVE OF THE PRAYER BOOK AND REVISING THE PRAYER BOOK

FROM the first Anglicanism has been what we should now call a liturgical movement. Both its intellectual and cultural ethos, and the development of its characteristic piety, have been influenced and shaped to a predominant degree by the Book of Common Prayer. The central role which the contemporary liturgical movement claims for the liturgy in the Church's life and Christian experience is reflected in the part played by the Book of Common Prayer—or by the several diverse but kindred Books of Common Prayer—in the world-wide unity of the Anglican Communion. In Anglicanism the liturgy is not a convenience but a necessity, not a seemly and luxuriant enrichment of the Church's life but rather the indispensable foundation of that life.

Liturgy, as we have already seen, is the true criterion of sound doctrine. More important, and again as we have already seen, liturgy is that element in the life of the Church Militant which is most of all continuous with the life of the Church Triumphant. Liturgy in time is the promise which will be fulfilled in eternity; liturgy is both the anticipation of the Kingdom that shall be and mystical participation in the reality of the Kingdom which now is. At no point in its visible earthly life does the Church Militant more obviously reveal itself as that which although situated in time is yet one with and part of a greater reality which exists eternally. However Aristotelian concrete and 'realistic' the Christian philosopher may be in all other contexts, when he turns to liturgy he finds himself almost compelled to be something of a Platonist.

Nor does this principle of the centrality of the liturgy in any way obscure or detract from the kindred principle of the centrality of Holy Scripture in the life of the Church. Not only is Holy

Scripture the principal and determining element in the liturgy, it is also true that the liturgical use of Holy Scripture is the most important and valid way of using it. Never is the Bible more completely at home than when we find it in the liturgy. The liturgy is the proper context of scripture, the context most congenial to its own nature. More than that, as we have already seen, to perform the liturgy is to perpetuate those patterns of redemptive action which we find in Holy Scripture and, of course, supremely in the gospel itself, for the Redemption is itself the primal archetype and fount of all liturgy. The shape of the liturgy is indeed the shape of the gospel. Of all the many and varied elements which compose the Church's earthly life, the liturgy is the most obviously evangelical. In the love of the liturgy which perpetuates by expressing and re-expressing the sovereignty and substance of the gospel the 'catholic' and 'evangelical' members of the Church can be entirely and wholeheartedly at one.

It has been said that the three parts of Western Christendom which emerged as separate entities out of the Reformation crisis and catastrophe all concentrated on different techniques for overcoming the wave of scepticism and perverted humanism which entered into western civilisation at the time of the Renaissance. Though protestantism, Anglicanism and Romanism were all influenced by the Renaissance in many important ways yet it is also true that the Protestant Reformation, the Anglican Reformation and the Roman Counter-Reformation were in strong reaction against many Renaissance currents of thought and feeling.

Protestantism concentrated particularly on devotion to Holy Scripture expressed in private Bible reading and in the public cult of the preaching of the gospel. To a very large extent this protestant preaching of the gospel was a matter of careful biblical exposition rather than a preaching of the gospel in the narrower but more correct sense of the word. The protestant tradition has perhaps not distinguished quite sharply enough between the exegetical sermon and the proclamation of the gospel. But as to the importance of this concentration on Holy Scripture, and to its validity in the Christian life, there can be no question, and the protestant devotion to the Bible has enriched the life of the whole Church by reaching out far beyond the confines of historical protestantism and influencing the devotional life of multitudes of

Christians who could not be called protestants in any strict and proper sense of the word.

Counter-reformation Romanism placed its stress on building up the habits and techniques of private prayer. The great glory of the Counter-Reformation—apart from its magnificent missionary effort—is the extraordinary number of masters of the inner devotional life which it produced. To this day the literature of classical Christian mysticism, with its profound understanding of the hidden ways of prayer, is predominantly a Roman Catholic literature. Again we may say that this mighty impulse of the spirit has spread far beyond the boundaries of the Roman Church and has placed all Christendom in its debt. We may note, however, that the reformation and counter-reformation reactions to the post-renaissance spiritual crisis were very close to each other. They are both of them cults of individual and private spirituality. The Bible for the reformers and their followers is not a book to be read in the way in which we read ordinary books. Rather it is a book to be read prayerfully and with the constant inward co-operation of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand the great ways of mental prayer mapped out for us by the counter-reformation pioneers are essentially biblical ways that in almost every case begin with the contemplation of the great and central mysteries of the gospel.

The Anglican approach to this matter differed sharply from both protestantism and Romanism. It was primarily a corporate spirituality, with, of course, important individualist overtones in proportion as the liturgy echoed and re-echoed through and into the depths of the individual spiritual life. The private prayers of Lancelot Andrewes are an inspiring example of the understanding of private prayer which may be achieved by the kind of man who takes it for granted that the true norm of Christian prayer is liturgical prayer, so that the function of private prayer is to enable a man to participate in the liturgy with the wholeness of his interior being.

Thus it is no exaggeration to say that by the seventeenth century protestant and Romanist spirituality had more in common with each other than either had in common with the characteristic flavour of Anglicanism. It is only in the twentieth century that Romanism and protestantism have begun to try to catch up with Anglicanism in this particular matter. The great liturgical move-

ment in the Roman Church is perhaps the most important movement of the Holy Spirit in the world of today, and it is also true that in large areas of the protestant world there is now a new interest in liturgy and a new sense of its supreme importance in the life of the Church.

It is above all, I think, when we concentrate upon the positive values of the Protestant, Romanist and Anglican traditions, rather than upon their unfortunate historical antagonisms to each other, that we perceive the absence of any essential conflict necessitated by eternal principles. Between these three approaches to the spiritual life there need be no quarrel of any kind. Not only can all three be combined in one existence if that existence is to comprehend the fulness of the Christian Church, all three can and must be combined in any one individual experience. Liturgy is the fulness of both devout biblicism and interior prayer, and it presupposes a devout biblicism and a profound life of prayer outside and yet continuous with the life that is lived in the liturgy. And this because our liturgical life will necessarily be a rather thin and tenuous reality unless it is the liturgical life of the man who is, even outside his liturgical life in the narrower sense of the word, both a man of the Bible and a man of prayer. The liturgy is the central element of the three precisely because it is the element which unifies the other two and in which they reach the fulness of their self-expression.

But if an intense love of the Prayer Book considered as a programme and a project is one of the primary characteristics of Anglicanism, this has not brought with it, except here and there and now and again, any complacent satisfaction with the Book of Common Prayer as we now possess it in any part of the Anglican Communion. In fact there has been a persistent feeling that the actual Books of Common Prayer which we possess and use fall short of their own ideal and in many ways fail to fulfil their own promise. The revision of the Prayer Book is indeed now one of the central and most persistent themes of Anglican thinking and this precisely because the role of the Prayer Book in Anglican life is so fundamental.

The explicit programme which from the beginning the Anglican Books of Common Prayer have been designed to fulfil may be described in three ways:

(*a*) The Anglican liturgy is essentially a vernacular liturgy. It

does not believe that the people of the Church can enjoy the real fulness of liturgical experience in any other language but their own mother tongue. Latin has indeed proved itself a magnificent liturgical language, and no disrespect to the place of the Latin language in the liturgical history of Christendom is either intended or necessary. The trouble about a Latin liturgy from the Anglican point of view is simply that Latin is no longer the mother tongue of any existing people.

(*b*) The Book of Common Prayer is an essentially conservative institution. In theory at all events it surrenders no part of the liturgical heritage of Western Christendom, except in order to remove unworthy innovations and manifest corruptions.

(*c*) The explicit appeal of the Anglicanism which brought forth the Book of Common Prayer is to Holy Scripture, and to the liturgical ideas and customs of the primitive Church as we glimpse them in the writings of the Fathers.

Thus the Anglican liturgy is vernacular and conservative, scriptural and patristic. These are its own explicit standards, and when we judge any particular version of the Book of Common Prayer by these standards we are imposing upon it no criteria external to its own. On the contrary it is our obedience to the central spirit of the Book of Common Prayer that compels us to judge and criticise it in accordance with such standards.

In the light of this analysis three fundamental criticisms of the Book of Common Prayer, as we now have it in various parts of the Anglican Communion, at once force themselves upon our attention.

(*a*) The classical versions of the Book of Common Prayer, originating in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, stem from a period in which the English language was entering upon a period of rapid development and growth. Although sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English is still for the most part intelligible, at all events to educated readers—for these centuries are also a golden period in the history of English literature—it cannot be claimed that the English of this time is any longer the vernacular in any part of the English-speaking world. No doubt the importance of this criticism has been greatly exaggerated, but to some extent it remains true that the actual language of the liturgy stands in need of cautious revision if our liturgy is to continue to be what it was always intended to be, a liturgy expressed in what we might

call the mother tongue at its very best. This is perhaps the least important of contemporary dissatisfactions with the Book of Common Prayer as we now have it, but it cannot be entirely neglected.

(*b*) The original Book of Common Prayer, although conservative in its aim and to some extent in its achievement, was not conservative enough, and in fact pricelessly valuable liturgical treasures were sacrificed, no doubt under the influence of the too negative and over-exasperated emotional prejudices of the time. So far the great work of recovery—to which I have already alluded —has taken the form of unofficial and unauthorised additions to the Book of Common Prayer, but it is not really desirable that it should be continued in this way. To a large extent revisions have been, and must continue to be, cautious essays in the work of liturgical recovery. In undertaking them we best fulfil the spirit of the Book of Common Prayer.

(*c*) No doubt the appeal to Holy Scripture and Christian antiquity was a healthy and valid one sincerely undertaken. The best scholarship available at the time was drawn into its service. Nevertheless the best scholarship available in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was from the point of view of modern scholarship still somewhat rudimentary, and the appeal to Scripture and the liturgical ideas and customs of the early church can now be made in the light of much more detailed and certain knowledge. Future revisions will be much more in line with the essential spirit and explicit standards of the Book of Common Prayer to the extent that they draw upon this newly available modern knowledge, even though in many areas it may lead us towards revisions and amendments that are indeed very radical. Our revisions will accord more with the underlying ethos of the Book of Common Prayer, not by being over-cautious and minimal, but rather by being bold and, where Scripture and antiquity indicate it, radical. On the other hand we must not make too much of the appeal to antiquity, for both mediaeval and modern spirituality also have something of importance to contribute. The really important thing is a radical appeal to Holy Scripture and to the new understanding of liturgy which is coming to us through biblical theology.

In the light of these remarks about the general character of Anglican liturgy we may perhaps attempt a few random notes and

suggestions which, it is modestly hoped and surmised, may be regarded as not entirely without value by those in the various parts of the Anglican Communion who find themselves entrusted with the heavy responsibility of proposing revisions.

(a) *The Maintenance of Literary Quality*

There can be no doubt that in its classical form the Book of Common Prayer is a magnificent piece of English literature, which has greatly and profoundly influenced the development of the language. While the literary quality of a liturgy can never be its primary characteristic, or constitute its supreme value, literary nobility and beauty is nevertheless an important auxiliary of liturgy, contributing significantly to its total expressive power. All revisions and proposed revisions of the Book of Common Prayer known to me fail significantly in this respect. New material can rarely stand up when placed side by side with the old, and verbal revisions, undertaken, and often rightly undertaken, with the object of removing what have become obscure archaisms, rarely possess the beauty of that which they replace, and often spoil the total aesthetic effect of the passages into which they are introduced. Possibly one way of avoiding such grave disadvantages would be to secure the co-operation of first-class writers and poets in the actual work of revision. It would then be for the liturgiologists and theologians on such revisionary committees to explain carefully to their literary colleagues precisely what they want, and for the latter to undertake the actual drafting of new passages and phrases with the general object of catching the spirit and idiom of the original. Often, of course, their task would be to attempt new translations from ancient sources, and here again they could find in the original versions of the Book of Common Prayer an inspiring flair for creative translation which is often lacking in our more laborious and pedantic modern essays in that medium. I would suggest that the presence of creative writers—and fortunately there are nowadays many of them in the Anglican Communion—on committees undertaking the task of Prayer Book revision should be regarded as just as important as the presence of theologians and liturgiologists. The presence of people who are neither creative writers, nor theologians, nor liturgiologists is probably an undesirable thing which does more harm than good. Such people doubtless possess many virtues

but they have nothing to contribute to the delicate task of Prayer Book revision, which is very much a question for experts.

(b) *The Nature of Revision*

Perhaps the worst defect of the standardised and authoritative Book of Common Prayer system, the defect, of course, of its merits, is the way in which it transforms liturgy into something prescribed, imposed and descending from above, rather than something which emerges out of the organic life of the Church. Too much liturgical uniformity is in fact undesirable, nor did it exist before the Reformation. The proper task of Prayer Book revision should be not so much to invent and impose liturgical novelties as to decide which of the various liturgical forms which have emerged out of a period of liturgical fluidity and experiment are of permanent worth, and should be built into the official and authoritative liturgical structure, and which must be judged unsuccessful and unworthy and eliminated altogether. Thus ideally Prayer Book revision should be preceded by what is sometimes called a period of liturgical confusion, as in the Church of England during the century after the Oxford Movement, so that the revisers are confronted with a host of experiments on which to pass judgment.

This has been rendered more difficult in the Anglican Communion by the unfortunately prevalent confusion between the idea of liturgy and the idea of Law. No doubt this first arose because in England itself the Church is established and its Book of Common Prayer is therefore, at least in theory, a book annexed to a series of parliamentary statutes having something of the force of the law of the land. The result is that liturgical experiment is often interpreted as 'lawlessness' in the most obvious and secular sense of the word. It is clear that any conception of a living thing like the liturgy which reduces it to an element of statute law runs clean contrary to its entire nature. Oddly enough, however, this legalistic attitude towards the liturgy is nowadays much more rare in England than in many other parts of the Anglican communion which have in fact less legal justification for their legalism. Whatever may be the lawyers' theory, the fact is that Anglicans in England during the last century or so have been distinguished by a remarkably free and creative attitude towards the liturgy, which is often consciously absent from Anglicanism in

other parts of the world. From the point of view of the theologian no problem arises here at all. Liturgy emphatically belongs to the realm of grace, not to the realm of law. No doubt we are bound in conscience to conform to reigning liturgical customs but the inward force that constrains us must always be love of the brethren and never fear of the courts. Liturgy cannot be imposed upon the Church by legalistic measures, rather it emerges expressively and freely out of the depths of the life of the Church. The man who worships in the liturgy can make his own the words of the psalmist: 'Out of the deep have I cried unto thee, O Lord.'

Closely connected with this subject is the question of what the Book of Common Prayer really is. Does it represent a minimum standard beneath which the clergy and parish churches are not supposed to fall, or a kind of maximum above which they must not rise? In the rather sordid party strife which has disfigured so much of the recent history of the Anglican Communion both these points of view have been maintained. The evangelical party—how evangelical is it to belong to a party?—have usually held that it is a maximum standard, and talked a great deal about the 'lawlessness' of the Anglo-Catholics. On the other hand the Anglo-Catholic party—and how can we justify the paradoxical concept of a 'catholic' party?—have usually regarded it as a minimum standard, and have strongly attacked many of the evangelicals for wantonly falling below it. Probably this controversy is of the kind in which none have won and none shall have prizes, but at least the Anglo-Catholic attitude has been the healthier one insofar as it has encouraged liturgical freedom and a continuous spate of experiments in the direction of liturgical recovery. For, as we have already seen, the recovery of treasures unhappily and unnecessarily sacrificed at the time of the Reformation must always be the chief aim of Prayer Book revision. On the other hand many of these experiments must be pronounced crude and unsatisfactory. Most of them take the form of over-literal and unintelligent translations from Latin sources, and perhaps the worst defects of the many missals and non-authoritative liturgical documents with which the Anglican Communion has been showered during the last hundred years or so is their poor literary quality and their inability to employ any principle of selection in their adaptations of Latin formularies. In my view, however satisfactory our future liturgical revisions may be we shall

do well to regard them as embodiments of a minimum and not a maximum standard, and not so to interpret them as to inhibit further liturgical experiment and advance.

(c) *The attitude of revisers towards Latin and Mediaeval Liturgy*

The purpose of liturgical revision is neither anti-Latin nor anti-mediaeval but rather to make the best and most creative use possible of all available liturgical resources. It is true that the nineteenth-century romantic movement led to a cult of the middle ages which did not always stop short of idolatry. The danger now is that we may react against this with an equally romantic and untenable cult of the patristic period and of the more antique liturgical forms characteristic of Eastern Orthodoxy. This would be just as foolish as the crass mediaevalism of an earlier generation. What is called ' the middle ages ' in the history of the Latin West was indeed a great epoch in the history of Christendom, both intellectually and spiritually, and it would be foolish to suppose that it is either possible or desirable for Anglicans to ignore or squander the treasures of their mediaeval heritage.

One example of the kind of tension that may arise in this area is the question of the respective place and role of both the Words of Institution and the *epiclesis*, or invocation of the Holy Spirit, in the eucharistic canon. It is doubtful whether either of these were important or significant features of the most primitive eucharistic prayer. Nevertheless both of them have a profound theological and devotional justification. In Holy Scripture it is by the power of the Holy Ghost that the Incarnation is consummated in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and in so far as the Incarnation is an element of that pattern of redemption which is perpetuated in the eucharist, we rightly invoke the Holy Ghost to consummate it for us here and now. On the other hand the recitation of the Words of Institution, originally no doubt part of the *anamnesis*, or testimony to the saving acts of God, has undoubtedly become a vitally important element in the type of Christian devotion which is peculiarly characteristic of Western Christianity. We may describe this kind of devotion as essentially dramatic and scriptural. The ceremonial stress on the importance of the Words of Institution which grew up during the middle ages, far from being repudiated at the Reformation, was even over-emphasised to a fault. Thus in many Lutheran liturgies the eucharistic prayer has

shrunk to a mere repetition of the Words of Institution, immediately followed by the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, and in the form of the Book of Common Prayer in official use in England since 1662—indeed since 1552—the Consecration contains only a brief prelude to the Words of Institution and then stops short. It is followed at once by the general communion of the faithful who immediately afterwards recite the Lord's Prayer. Indeed, so far as this matter is concerned, we should not err very greatly if we were to speak of the super-mediaevalism of the Reformation.

Nor is this devotional and liturgical tradition one entirely to be ignored. Not only does it fit in with the dramatic character of western spirituality, the insight that the liturgy is a drama in which the living God acts rather than a devout meditation in which the eternal God is adored, but it also embodies and expresses a deep reverence for Holy Scripture, a feeling that the scriptural word must always have a certain priority of dignity over even the most hallowed human liturgical word. I cannot, of course, speak here with any certainty, but my impression is that even where the *epiclesis* has most rightly and helpfully been reintroduced to the Anglican liturgy it is still, for the average Anglican worshipper, a less awe-inspiring moment than that of the recitation of the Words of Institution. Indeed, the essential character of western devotionalism, with its scriptural emphasis and thoroughly dramatic feeling tone, almost necessitates that this should be so. Our task then is to reincorporate the theological and devotional values of the *epiclesis* in such a way as not to nullify or embarrass the western character of the Anglican devotional life. In my view the best way of doing this is to turn our back on the Eastern Orthodox devotional practice and place the *epiclesis* immediately before the Words of Institution, as in the revised South African Book of Common Prayer. From the theological point of view it makes little or no difference where we place it. It is not our western theological beliefs but our western devotional habits which are somewhat irked and frustrated by the presence of the *epiclesis* after the Words of Institution. In fact if we place the *epiclesis* before the Words of Institution then its great devotional value and its profound theological validity would make a greater and not a less impression upon the minds of western worshippers, which tend I think to glide over the *epiclesis* a little too lightly and quickly when it is placed, as in so many Anglican revisions, after the (to

most Anglicans) all important, and from the dramatic point of view traumatic, Words of Institution. What, however, is quite indefensible is to continue with the eucharistic canon after the Words of Institution in the traditional way but nevertheless direct the priest to make the fraction of the host at the recitation of the words 'He brake it', instead of at the end of the canon itself. This is a piece of super-mediaevalism of the kind which cannot be too strongly deprecated. The whole eucharistic prayer, including the Lord's Prayer, is essentially a giving of thanks, and it is not until after the total giving of thanks has been concluded that the infinitely significant act called 'the fraction' should be permitted to take place. This is very clear from St. Paul's brief account of the eucharistic act in 1 Corinthians. It is only when or after the Lord had given thanks over the bread that He brake it. Certainly we should never allow ourselves to depart from this vitally important biblical precedent. This is but one example—although perhaps the most important of all possible examples—of the way in which Anglican liturgical revision should always endeavour to make a synthesis of the values of the Eastern and Western liturgical traditions, and should carefully refrain from setting one over against the other or siding with one against the other. On the contrary both have their values and we must not acquiesce in the view that these values are incompatible.

In concluding this section we may note that Protestant and Evangelical Christianity is as characteristically Western as Romanism, and that in moving away from Latin liturgical models by adopting those which we find in the liturgies of the Eastern Orthodox we are moving away not only from Romanism but also from the spirit of the Reformation. It is precisely because I would not wish to get too far from the spirit of the Reformation that I am willing to run the risk of what may appear to some people to be a little too much like a dash of Romanism here and there. Certainly Anglican liturgical revision should never be undertaken under the influence of any spirit which dictates that whatever we do, and in whatever context, we must always and necessarily get as far away from Rome and Latin liturgical forms as possible. To react against Rome in undiscriminating fashion is just as bad as to copy Rome in the same manner. To react totally and undiscriminatingly against it resembles slavishly imitating it at least in this sense, that both forms of behaviour

equally allow that which we are copying or against which we are reacting constantly to ' call the tune '. The anti-Romanist is just as much dominated by Rome as the Romanist. In the one case Rome settles what shall be done, while in the other case it settles what shall not be done. I would suggest that where liturgical revision, and indeed where everything else is concerned, we should abhor and abjure both these slavish attitudes.

(d) *The role of the theologian in liturgical revision*

As I have already suggested, the role of the theologian in liturgical revision is quite as important as that of the technical and scholarly liturgiologist. Probably the most important part which the theologian can play in the middle of the twentieth century is to press persistently the way in which we can find in Holy Scripture considerations which should determine the overall shape of the liturgy. This is closely connected with the new sense in contemporary theology of the extent to which liturgy itself is a theological concept of primary importance. As I have already insisted, the redemption itself must be regarded as a liturgy or great work of God. Indeed it is not only *a* liturgy but rather *the* great primal liturgy, in which all the human liturgy of the Church Militant lives and moves and has its being, in which all the human liturgy of the Church Militant is mystically grounded and with which it is ultimately one. From this point of view the Prayer Book is not merely a set of nicely phrased and acceptable acts of human devotion. Rather its function is to set forth the whole pattern of human redemption, and indeed to enable men to interact with each other and before God in accordance with the pattern of redemption. Liturgy is first of all the act of God in human history, and secondly the same infinitely efficacious act of God re-enacted again and again and again in the life of the Church so long as time shall last. The pattern of liturgy is the pattern of redemption and the liturgical act is above all the uniquely Christian act.

The purpose of the eucharistic liturgy is not, as so often seems to be supposed, to bring about or consummate the ' real presence '. God does that through the act of His Eternal Word, recalling the central role of the Word in creation itself. The purpose of the liturgy is to plead before God the infinite power to redeem and save of the one all-sufficing sacrifice of Christ. It is the objective

act which corresponds to and expresses the inward principle of 'justification by faith' which without the eucharistic sacrifice may too easily be subjectively interpreted. Thus the shape of the liturgy should be determined by our doctrine of the eucharistic sacrifice rather than by our doctrine of the 'real presence'.

But apart from this central insistence on the biblical foundation and character of liturgy the theologian can serve also in other ways, often with criticism on relatively minor and unimportant points. One example of this is the admittedly somewhat trivial matter of the endings of the collects. The structure of all Christian prayer is radically trinitarian. When Christians pray they pray *in* the Spirit, *through* the Son, *to* the Father. Many of the collects in the Book of Common Prayer are set forth in precisely this way, and they contain an explicit reference to the Holy Spirit in the concluding passage. Some, however, abbreviate the ending to a mere 'through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen'. Thus so far as their positive content is concerned they are binitarian rather than trinitarian prayers. This is surely a grave and easily remediable error which ought to be corrected. Where a number of collects have to be used one after the other the traditional way was to recite the full trinitarian endings to the first and last of the collects and to 'telescope' the intermediate collects by omitting the endings altogether. This practice could easily be revived by listing the endings of the collects and other prayers in the introduction to the Book of Common Prayer and ending the actual collects in the body of the Book with the simple word 'through', leaving the priest himself to insert the appropriate ending. This matter is perhaps more important than it seems, because the tendency of Christian devotion to fall short of Christian theological insight and slide into a kind of working binitarianism has been chronic in the Christian Church from the very beginning, and it certainly ought not to be encouraged or facilitated by anything which can be found in our Book of Common Prayer.

(*e*) So far we have discussed liturgical revision in the Anglican Communion without questioning what is now its accepted basis, i.e. that each Church of the Anglican Communion should be in sole charge of its own liturgical revision and should be free to adopt whatever revisions it thinks best. As the Anglican communion is at present constituted there seems little alternative.

The question is whether we should not be wise to devise some alternative. After all the unity of the Anglican communion as at present constituted is very largely a liturgical unity, and as the revisions of the Book of Common Prayer diverge more and more sharply from each other there is considerable danger that we shall gradually erode away the soil in which our unity has taken root. This, however, is an important question which really focuses our attention on the problem of the future constitutional development of the Anglican Communion, a problem so important that it demands a section to itself, and it is to such a consideration that we must now turn.

8

THE FUTURE OF THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION

IN the full sense of a written constitutional document the Anglican Communion possesses no constitution at all. It is held together by the force of custom and tradition rather than by enacted laws and contracted obligations. Nor is this altogether an undesirable thing. There is much to be said for the view that unwritten constitutions, resting upon tradition and precedent, are tougher and more enduring forms of relationship than written constitutions. The trouble with written constitutions is that they are necessarily formulated at some one particular time and under the influence of some particular historical situation. Once this particular set of conditions has passed away a paper constitution inevitably limits those who are bound by it to many irrelevancies and archaisms, and it is much more difficult to adapt it to the needs of a new set of circumstances. The conservative forces within the institution will always tend to resist the radical revision of the state of affairs to which they have become accustomed, and which in past circumstances has amply proved its worth. Certainly it is not the purpose of this chapter to argue that the Anglican Communion would be well advised at this or any other particular time to cumber itself with a paper constitution.

But although the Anglican Communion as a whole lacks a written constitution, most of the constituent Metropolitan Provinces or independent ' churches ' of which it is composed do now possess a constitutional document of some kind. When a number of institutions each possessing a written constitution are bound together in one institution whose legal form is much less clear-cut a dangerous situation may arise, because the unity of the constituent institutions is so much more evident and visible than the unity and integrity of the overarching institution. Many Anglicans, for example, would claim that the Anglican Communion is not a church but rather a fellowship or association of independent

churches. In the light of the theological analysis of the meaning of the word 'church' already outlined in this book this formula may be seen to be a very dubious one indeed. Terms like 'a church' or 'the churches' are permissible only in a drastically qualified sense, and it might be better never to use such terms at all. The fact remains, however, that in the present situation of Anglicanism the unity and integrity of the constituent parts is much more clearly visible than the unity and integrity of the whole.

Even in the Church of England the series of statutes dealing with Church affairs since the time of the Anglican Reformation, and especially the Enabling Act of 1919, has provided the Church with something so like a paper constitution as to be almost indistinguishable from it. We may note in passing that the Church of England is now the only large area of Anglicanism which retains those ties with the State which usually go by the name of 'Establishment'. Many English Nonconformists still persist in regarding Establishment as the essential characteristic of the Anglican system. The fact that all other areas of Anglicanism have either been disestablished or never been established at all indicates that this interpretation is clearly incorrect. Establishment is a matter of polity rather than of what we have called theological structure; it is a local historical accident, and whether or not the Church is established depends more upon the secular political attitudes obtaining at a particular time and place than upon religious attitudes and questions of theological principle. Indeed we may boldly say that no questions of theological principle arise at all in this matter. Establishment has many characteristic advantages and at the same time many characteristic disadvantages. In this it inevitably resembles all other forms of church polity in this fallen world. Indeed we may say that disestablishment also possesses both characteristic advantages and characteristic disadvantages. Just as there is no theology of establishment, so there is no theology of disestablishment. The way of wisdom, we may say, is to accept and live with and under the reigning historical conditions. 'Are you established? Do not seek to be disestablished. Are you disestablished? Do not seek to be established.' It is significant, however, that in the middle of the twentieth century most areas of Anglicanism flourish and survive in the disestablished condition; certainly establishment is essential neither to Anglican unity nor to Anglican survival.

Suggestions towards fostering Anglican unity

What is important, however, is that steps should be taken in the future to make the world-wide unity of Anglicanism as obvious an institutional reality as the local unity of its constituent parts. No one would wish to whittle away or unjustly restrict the independence and spontaneity of the constituent parts, but it might be well to add to that independence a more obvious and sacramentally institutionalised interdependence. Some champions of the present condition of Anglicanism have talked rather rashly of the ' sovereign independence ' of the so-called constituent Anglican churches. The theological implications of this phrase are very disquieting. In Christian theological polity God is the only sovereign and the Church is in fact, as the world is in principle, a theocracy. The notion of ' sovereign independence ', whether of churches or of nations, must always from the Christian point of view prove ultimately a dangerous and idolatrous illusion. Such independence as men and human institutions may rightly possess must always be within and subject to their ultimate interdependence under God. Even in the political and international realm this truth is beginning to be perceived more clearly, and it is certainly a truth which our forms of Church order should make clearly visible. The trouble about any conception of the Church as an association or fraternity of national churches is that it too closely resembles the modern political institution of a world organised into a large number of independent nations. I have already suggested that this characteristically ' modern ' political condition is one doomed to pass away in the course of the next century or so.

Though for long this was the actual, it was never an ideal state of affairs. Indeed it has brought upon mankind many grievous and terrible sufferings. Certainly it has never been a kind of polity which the Church of God was either right or wise to imitate, and the imitation of it now, in the middle of the twentieth century, becomes less and less feasible and desirable. There is certainly something odd and paradoxical about the way in which many Christian, including Anglican, thinkers exhort the nations of the earth to transcend and escape from their notion of the world as for ever divided up into sovereign nations while at the same time proposing that the Anglican Communion should continue to tolerate

a very similar state of affairs in the Church. Sauce for goose is sauce for gander, and if it is right and wise for nations to restrict and attenuate their sovereignty in the interests of greater world-wide union, it is certainly only just that those in the Church who advocate and recommend such developments should themselves be ready to light the way back to the idea of one Church of God in God's one world. We can thus see every reason for dissatisfaction with the present constitutional condition of world-wide Anglicanism.

On the other hand it is not easy to see precisely in what direction we should be well advised to bend our steps. Certainly no Anglican, least of all the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, would wish to see the See of Canterbury transformed into something rather resembling another papacy. Yet the Archbishop of Canterbury, by a tradition now nearly a hundred years old of summoning the bishops of the Anglican Communion from the four corners of the earth to take counsel with him every ten years at the Lambeth Conference, is still the one centre of world-wide unity that we possess, and it is clearly around him that institutions which focus, and in which is focused and represented, the international character of Anglicanism should be gathered. Mutual consultations through some kind of continuing committee of the Lambeth Conference should surely under contemporary conditions be permanent and unremitting. Nor in these days of speedy world-wide travel should it be impossible to arrange for such a committee, meeting frequently at regular sessions, to function as an essential element in the very heart of Anglican life. What we want is not so much a new institution as a great intensification of the mutual consultations we already enjoy, an intensification sacramentally embodied in some continuing and respected body.

More important still there should be something essential to their common life which the various parts of the Anglican communion firmly resolve to do together rather than separately. Perhaps the most obvious of these, as I have already suggested, is the work of Prayer Book revision. The present system of allowing each part of the Anglican Communion to undertake its own revision of the Prayer Book in complete independence of all other parts is slowly destroying the basis of our primarily liturgical unity. No doubt the predominantly conservative character of most of these revisions will prevent us from doing so altogether, but the system

itself is nevertheless bad in principle and often regrettable in practice. A Pan-Anglican Liturgical Conference would clearly be much stronger in personnel than any merely provincial committee of revisers could ever hope to become, and in a much better position to make the radical proposals which are at some points necessary. Here is a task basic to our common life which we ought to tackle together. To do so would be better both in principle and in practice. No doubt we should continue as heretofore to possess the Book of Common Prayer in a variety of differing provincial versions, but at least we should possess that variety, and even extend it, within a context of agreed purposes, standards and objectives. It might even be possible so to develop the various versions of the Book of Common Prayer that they should all possess some great central features in common (e.g. if there could be one basic order of the Eucharist and order for the administration of Baptism through the Anglican Communion used universally at least on certain prescribed festivals of the Church's year, it would greatly strengthen our unity, and, equally important, make it more manifest to ourselves and to the world outside).

Another area of common life in which more concentrated and continuous co-operation is both possible and advisable is that of Anglican missions outside the great areas of Anglican strength. There is no real reason, for example, why Anglican Christianity in Africa should be almost uniquely a British responsibility, whereas Anglicanism in areas like Latin America and the Philippines should be primarily left to American Anglicanism. All these areas are of common concern. Even more absurd and anomalous is the situation with regard to the Anglican chaplaincies in Europe, some of which are under English and others under American jurisdiction. Surely all of these should be under a jurisdiction of their own which is neither especially English nor especially American, although, of course, both Churches should show a responsible concern for their welfare. At the moment these chaplaincies are in some cases appendages of the Church of England and in other cases derivative from the Church in America, which leads to the odd consequence that in some European cities (e.g. Geneva) two Anglican churches of different jurisdiction exist within a stone's throw of each other. My suggestion would be that all these churches should be under one central episcopal jurisdiction which would not be either particularly American or English. Indeed

their first bishop might just as well be a Canadian or a South African. The important thing is that we all speak with one voice in one place. This is just one particular anomaly which arises out of a too great obsession with the idea of independent national churches, and inevitably obscures the world-wide unity of Anglicanism.

Another desirable thing in Anglicanism would be the facilitation of a much greater exchange of ministerial personnel between the various parts of the Anglican Communion. Such exchanges are much more frequent than they were. At one time they were almost entirely confined to missionary areas, but nowadays it is by no means uncommon to find American parish priests working in England, Canadians in the United States and even *vice versa*. This development should be even more strongly encouraged, for few things so vividly make manifest the unity of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican episcopate within the various countries, however, still tends to be somewhat monotonously indigenous. Surely there is no real reason why the British Crown should not occasionally nominate, shall we say, an American priest to an English See, or why perhaps a Canadian diocese should not elect a South African or an Australian to be its bishop. Several of the mediaeval Archbishops of Canterbury were not Englishmen, and there is no particular theological reason why a bishop should be a citizen of the country in which he has his see. Anything which would make manifest the ineradicable internationalism of the Catholic Church would have a genuine sacramental significance of the utmost importance. Indeed it is even more important that the contemporary church should be well adjusted to the world of tomorrow than that it should adjust itself to the world of today, or strive to remain adjusted to the world of yesterday. It has been said that he who marries today will be a widower tomorrow. There is, as I have already suggested, every reason to suppose that present world historical tendencies will result in a new political condition of mankind, which in its fluidity, and with the decay of isolationist nationalism will resemble the middle ages much more closely than the modern period. The Christian Church should not merely acquiesce in this situation once and after it has arisen, but rather take the initiative and actively contribute to the historical conditions which will bring it about.

It is, perhaps, too early to attempt in any way to predict what will be the ultimate consequences of the recent appointment of a well-known American bishop to act with and under the Archbishop of Canterbury as a kind of administrator of the world wide Anglican communion. At least the existence of such a form of Church leadership, particularly responsible for a unifying missionary strategy, but almost certainly not ignoring some of the other matters mentioned in this chapter, will draw attention both to the fact of Anglican unity and to the increasing extent to which Anglicans in general wish to see it fostered and strengthened. From the point of view of this book this development is one to be enthusiastically welcomed and acclaimed.

The Future of the Anglican Ideal

All these suggestions presuppose a diagnosis and interpretation of Anglicanism which ventures to affirm that it has a tremendous, indeed measureless, future in the history of Christendom. As a whole Anglicans, perhaps because of their modesty, rarely rhapsodise or express themselves freely on the subject of Anglicanism. No doubt this is a charming and winning mannerism, but there are times when we should say frankly what is really in all our minds. No Anglican would wish to gloss over or excuse the manifest defects and corruptions of the Anglican communion, indeed in this book I have suggested that it is significant and precious because of what it promises to become rather than because of what it either is or has been. When we judge it in the light of its own vision and potentialities our judgment upon Anglicanism as it now is must necessarily be a somewhat harsh and negative one. Nevertheless it is the conviction of the Anglican, a conviction which even his high regard for his non-Anglican Christian brethren cannot always silence, that of all the many parts of our present fragmented Christendom Anglicanism makes possible a balanced presentation of the gospel of Christ, and a living of the Christian life in all its fulness, which is not to be found elsewhere.

What we may ask ourselves has the contemporary Christian a right to ask and demand of that portion of fragmented Christendom of which he calls himself a member? First of all that it should be a channel of authority, that it should bring him within the sphere of the authority of our Lord the Holy Ghost and

confront him with and communicate to him in all their richness the characteristic forms of historic Christian experience. It should be a channel of living tradition which actively constrains him to perceive the significance of these historic forms so that his life is permeated by them. At the very heart of this tradition there must be a clear-cut declaration of and witness to that apostolic teaching or preaching about Jesus which is the only indispensable rule of the Church's faith. The authority of the Church is thus not merely the authority of men, still less merely the authority of some men over other men, but the authority of the Holy Ghost and the gospel over all men, made manifest in biblical liturgy and apostolic creed, and in all the great historic ways and forms of Christian existence. This is perhaps the only kind of spiritual and intellectual authority to which the free man can rationally bow. It is the kind of authority that he finds in the historic liturgy, considered as the transmission of an experience which it does not cause and as the cause of an experience which transcends it.

Secondly his Church must be an area of genuine freedom, not merely the fallen man's somewhat over-estimated freedom of choice, but the genuine freedom of true rational and spiritual life, a freedom which sin and corruption takes away but the Grace of God magnanimously restores. The Christian man in the Church is a man face to face with an authority which immerses him in an experience, rather than a man slavishly under an authority which dictates how he must respond to and interpret it. The Christian man is God's free man, and precisely because it is the only area of eternally valid authority the Church is also inescapably the true area of human freedom. The truth with which Christianity confronts us is inevitably the truth that makes us free, the truth without which we cannot be truly free. Christian authority enforces Christian freedom. Thus the proper characteristic of life in the Church Militant is a unity of both authority and freedom which makes it possible for us to discern the true nature of each.

Thirdly, such a Church must be an area of all-embracing response, an area whose traditional ways and modes of response engulf the whole man, and therefore make it possible for the whole man to come to God, with his materiality as well as his spirituality, with his rationality as well as his fidelity, with his intelligence as well as his emotions. This means that at its heart it must be

sacramental and liturgical in the widest sense of the word. The Christian response to the gospel must be a way and mode of response which comprehends within its overarching unity not only human existence but the existence of that natural order which is not merely the context of human existence but also one ingredient of human existence. Only in and with and through the redemption of the created orders of being in which he lives and moves can the whole of human existence become a truly redeemed existence, the redemption that is, not of the creature out of the creation, but of the creation itself, and therefore of the creature in the creation.

Such a Church as I have described, an area of spirituality but at the same time an area of culture and common life—because any area of spirituality which is not also an area of cultural and common life is no true area even of spirituality—must in the fullest sense of the word be both Catholic and Evangelical at the same time, completely overcoming and transcending the false dichotomies, misleading antitheses, and vicious antagonisms of the post-reformation Christianity of the western world. It will abhor and avoid both the petty sectarianism—riddled, I believe, with ingrained suspicions of nature and culture—of the modern protestant world, and the ecclesiastical totalitarianism of the Roman Church. Such a form of church life and church order, I would claim, can in the contemporary world be found in Anglicanism and in Anglicanism almost, although I would gladly admit not quite, alone. Everywhere in Anglicanism such a condition of overflowing yet balanced Christian spirituality is at least possible, although again, and this I would admit much more sadly, by no means everywhere in Anglicanism is it actual. Almost certainly in my view there must be many souls located in those parts of the Christian world from which Anglicanism is still unhappily absent, who without knowing it are famishing for what only Anglicanism can provide. The Romanist and protestant systems leave them unsatisfied; the one because it has concealed the glories of historic Christianity beneath a dead weight of systematic ecclesiasticism, the other because it has estranged itself from the depths of historic Christianity altogether. In actual fact many such people have no Church at all, and the question of the desirability and feasibility of the extension of the Anglican mission and witness to those reputedly Christian parts of the world from which it is now to all

intents and purposes absent is one which in my view insistently arises. No Anglican wishes to proselytise other Christians. The truth which really causes me such anxiety is that in those parts of the world from which Anglicanism is now absent there are probably many people who are outside Christianity and the Christian Church altogether, simply because they have never been confronted with it in its Anglican form. The many Anglicans who, like me, feel that if they had never known Anglicanism they might well have been prevented from ever entering the Christian Church at all will know precisely what I have in mind. For many of us Romanism and protestantism simply will not do, and we could not with honesty and integrity make our peace with either. As I have already said, this is not the kind of thing that Anglicans declare very often, but it is a part of our testimony to Anglicanism about which we cannot always keep silent. Here is the fulness of the gospel and the fulness of the Christian life. Ought there to be any part of the world in which we refrain from publishing such things? That is a question which I will not attempt to answer here. I merely put it to the reader in the form in which it has repeatedly put itself to me. I believe that sooner or later the mind of Anglicanism must seek from the Holy Spirit His answer and abide by what He says.

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